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ABSTRACT

Part of a systematic, in-depth assessment of Miami-Dade Community College's (MDCC's) educational programs, student support systems, and selected campus-level activities, this volume of the college's institutional self-study report examines the impact and effectiveness of prescriptive education at the MDCC. The report contains results of four studies evaluating collegewide reforms in the areas of entry-level testing and student placement, developmental reading and writing courses, developmental computation courses, and instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL). After introductory material provides an overview of the study, the study methodology is described, including information on the organization of the Prescriptive Education Committee; the identification of evaluation issues, data sources, and target groups; and sampling methods and data analyses. Next, results and conclusions are presented within nine major evaluation areas: (1) attitudes toward placement testing; (2) effectiveness of the entry-level placement program; (3) effectiveness of the ESL placement program; (4) effectiveness of the developmental program; (5) use of diagnostic testing in developmental courses; (6) use of exit testing in developmental courses; (7) the effectiveness of the ESL program; and (8) use of diagnostic testing in ESL. (HB)

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VOLUME II

PRESCRIPTIVE EDUCATION

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VOLUME II

PRESCRIPTIVE EDUCATION

MIAMI-DADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

1984 INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY

ABSTRACT

The goal of increasing access to higher education for all types of students has challenged community colleges to deal effectively with substantial differences in student preparedness. To meet this challenge, Miami-Dade Community College reformed its educational program and student support systems, including reinstating entry-level testing and requiring developmental and English as a Second Language (ESL) coursework for students needing college-preparatory instruction. Recent state legislative initiatives regarding entry-level testing, compensatory instruction, and certification of exiting skills have confirmed the College's foresight in implementing these reforms.

For purposes of the 1984 Institutional Self-Study, a committee composed of twenty-one College faculty and staff was established to evaluate the effectiveness of the College's prescriptive education programs. Members of the Prescriptive Education Committee were assigned to either the Testing and Placement or the Developmental/ESL subcommittee, with the latter further divided into three study groups addressing developmental reading and writing, developmental computation, and ESL instruction. Nine evaluation goals were developed and investigated by these groups. Data-gathering strategies included reviewing the extensive collection of reports prepared by the Office of Institutional Research and compiling responses to four survey questionnaires constructed, administered, and analyzed by the Prescriptive Education Committee.

Results indicated broad support for the prescriptive education reforms instituted by the College. These programs were viewed by students, faculty, administrators, and various community groups as effective and as serving significant needs. Although community groups felt that students should have the necessary skills before enrolling, they also overwhelmingly supported college-

preparatory instruction. This was interpreted as implying that improvement in postsecondary education was needed without necessarily closing the door to a significant number of students. The overall conclusion from existing empirical studies indicated that Miami-Dade has been successful in serving many students who would not have had the opportunity to pursue a college education without the College's open access philosophy.

Based upon a review of the extensive findings gathered from various sources, the Prescriptive Education Committee recommended that the College should: 1) communicate more effectively to various constituencies concerning its educational mission and the importance of an open door admissions policy; 2) familiarize faculty and staff with current placement policy and with instruments utilized for placement; 3) further standardize and apply placement policy more consistently across campuses; 4) conduct comprehensive research programs concerning the effectiveness of developmental and ESL programs; 5) refine and standardize diagnostic assessment, reassignment strategies, and exit criteria for developmental and ESL programs; 6) establish a system to identify students capable of pursuing an academic ESL program; and 7) coordinate existing committee structures to address the numerous unanswered questions and suggestions made by the Prescriptive Education Committee.

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INTRODUCTION

This volume of the Miami-Dade 1984 Institutional Self-Study final report contains results of the four studies evaluating the collegewide reforms in the area of prescriptive education. This area of the College's reforms includes those programs relating to testing and placement, developmental reading and writing courses, development computation courses, and instruction in English as a second language (ESL).

Four study groups comprised of College faculty and staff evaluated each of the above areas. The findings from each group were synthesized for presentation in this single volume. Since the volume focuses primarily upon results and recommendations, only salient features of the history and description of the present programs are presented. However, more extensive background information is available to SACS reviewers in separate reference files, and to other readers upon request.

Entry-Level Placement Program

History and Development. Miami-Dade Community College, under its open door policy, has throughout its history offered admission to all high school graduates, transfer students, and foreign students. During certain periods, even students without high school degrees were accepted if they were at least 18 years of age. Because of this non-selective admission policy, students have enrolled with a broad range of abilities, some with substantially deficient academic skills.

Because of this diversity of students, Miami-Dade has always utilized some type of assessment to assist with course placement. In 1960, scores from the School and College Ability Test (SCAT), the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, and the

Florida Twelfth Grade Test were utilized to place students in selected courses. This testing program remained in effect until 1974 with only slight modifications.

Because of increased concern for the accessibility of higher education and support for the student's right to fail, the entire area of entry-level placement testing was questioned. As a result of statewide modifications, use of the Florida Twelfth Grade Test was discontinued for placement testing during the early 1970s. However, because of the continuing need to identify and remediate students with poor basic skills, each Miami-Dade campus evolved its own placement program.

By the middle 1970s, there was renewed support among faculty and administrators to re-establish a collegewide assessment program. As a result, the Collegewide Assessment Steering Committee, established in 1978, developed a basic skills assessment program to identify students needing developmental instruction prior to enrollment in the new general education core courses.

Although the program proposed by the Committee was not implemented in its entirety, a collegewide entry-level placement program was established by the Spring Term, 1980. The Comparative Guidance and Placement Program (CGP) published by the College Board was selected as the primary placement instrument.

The College Research and Testing Committee was charged with establishing placement scores and procedures. This entailed compiling data into an annual report which included: 1) developing local norms, 2) monitoring compliance with placement policies, and 3) establishing the validity of the placement scores.

Approximately 40,000 students have been tested since the CGP was implemented in 1980. Studies have indicated that students scoring at or above the established placement scores have performed better in the general education courses than students with lower scores. The system, however, has retained

sufficient flexibility to allow low scoring but highly-motivated students to enroll in college-level courses if they present other evidence of their competency.

The Current Testing and Placement Program. Since 1980, College policy has required placement testing for the following students:

- All first-time-in-college students enrolling for nine or more credits.
- All students registering for English or mathematics courses.
- All students whose cumulative registration is 15 credits or more.
- All dual enrollees (students enrolled in College courses while still in high school).

Until the Winter Term of 1985, students with a CGP raw score below 22 (30th percentile, national norms) on the Written English Expression subtest were precluded from enrolling in the required college-level communications course (ENC 1101). Likewise, students with a raw score below 21 (55th percentile) in computation were precluded from enrollment in introductory algebra (MAT 1024). Students with previous algebra background could elect to take the elementary algebra test, to exempt them from this course, if a raw score of 20 (54th percentile) were achieved. Students scoring below these scores were required to complete specific developmental instruction before enrolling in these college-level courses.

In contrast, only students with a raw score of ten or below (6th percentile) were required to enroll in a developmental reading course. A raw score of 19 (32nd percentile) was established as indicating college-level reading skills. However, those students scoring between 10 and 19 have been very strongly encouraged, though not required, to take developmental coursework in reading.

Test scores have also been used to place students within specific levels of developmental work. These scores were established via an informal consensus among faculty members in reading and writing. However, these scores have never been empirically validated nor uniformly applied collegewide.

In addition, the College will accept scores from the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Testing Program (ACT) in lieu of the CGP. A combined score of 840 on the SAT or a composite score of 17 on the ACT will exempt the student from developmental coursework. Students with scores below these levels are required to take the CGP and be placed according to the procedure previously described.

The entry-level placement program remained essentially unchanged until Winter Term, 1985 when the state mandated the use of common entry-level tests throughout Florida. From the list of approved instruments, Miami-Dade selected the Florida Multiple Assessment Program and Services (MAPS) published by the College Board. The College has established interim placement scores until statewide scores become effective on July 1, 1985.

The ESL Placement Program

History and Development. Since Miami-Dade has attracted a large number of students for whom English is not their native language, a different placement program has been utilized with those students requiring instruction in English as a second language (ESL). Traditionally, colleges have utilized the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to determine the English-language proficiency of international students. Miami-Dade has utilized a second assessment to "confirm" proficiency and to place students into specific levels of ESL instruction. This second test has also been used to place the large number of non- English speaking students who are either resident aliens or refugees.

Until the Summer Term of 1979, the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (hereafter referred to as the Michigan), consisting of 100 multiple-choice items in grammar and vocabulary, had been used as this second instrument. As of the following Fall Term, the English Placement Test (EPT) replaced the Michigan. This test also consisted of 100 multiple-choice items but assessed listening comprehension and reading in addition to vocabulary and grammar.

Since the authors of the EPT (Spaan and Strowe, 1972) indicated that norms and placement scores were to be developed locally, an ad hoc ESL Program Committee was established in the Fall Term of 1980 to oversee these efforts. However, in the absence of appropriate data, this committee adopted what was termed by one observer as "certain heuristic and presumably temporary equivalencies between the TOEFL and the EPT scores" (Rivas, 1980, p. 5) which were then used for placement into levels of ESL instruction.

Dissatisfaction with the EPT has led to several, albeit unsystematic, efforts at the campus level to refine and improve the placement process. These efforts have included the addition of a writing sample, an individual oral interview, and minor changes in the placement scores.

In an attempt to establish a common placement process, an ESL Placement Committee was appointed in September, 1983. Despite several months of deliberations, the committee failed to establish such a common placement system (ESL Placement Committee, 1984).

No research has been conducted to determine the efficacy of ESL placement scores other than one campus-level study (Romanik, 1983). This is in contrast to annual validity reports prepared for the CGP.

The Current ESL Placement Program. International students are required to take the TOEFL if their native language is not English. A score of 550 exempts

the student from ESL instruction. These students then take the CGP and are placed according to established scores. As of Winter, 1985, these students will be taking the Florida MAPS. Students scoring below 550 must enroll in the ESL program and are placed in specific levels of instructions according to scores on the EPT. Refugees and resident alien students with limited language skills in English also enroll in the ESL program after taking the EPT. As students complete the fourth level of ESL instruction, they are tested and placed in the same manner as other students.

Placement scores for the ESL program vary from campus to campus. These scores as of the Winter Term of 1985, are as follows:

	NORTH CAMPUS	SOUTH CAMPUS	WOLFSON CAMPUS (Language Institute)	WOLFSON CAMPUS (Bilingual Division)
Level I	0-30	0-34	0-35	0-50
Level II	31-55	35-50	36-60	51-70
Level III	56-70	51-74	61-70	71-80
Level IV	71-84	75-90	71-85	81-90
No ESL Recommended	85-100	91-100	86-100	91-100

ESL faculty at the Language Institute located at the Wolfson Campus also utilize a writing sample and an individual interview prior to placement. The ESL faculty member then assigns students to a level in each of the four areas (grammar, speech, writing, and reading). The Medical Center Campus does not offer an ESL Program. Any student requiring such instruction is referred to another campus.

The Developmental Program

History and Development. As with placement testing, Miami-Dade has offered

developmental instruction since the inception of the College. In the early 1960s, Miami-Dade implemented its Guided Studies Program, which included two developmental courses in reading and two in writing. Students were selected for these courses on the basis of an evaluation of former school work, placement test scores, and the recommendation of College counselors. Students did not receive college credit for these courses.

During most of the 1970s, however, all credits earned in developmental courses counted toward graduation. In 1980, the College limited to six the number of developmental credits that could count. Since 1982, these courses have earned only institutional credits, which do not count toward graduation.

Policy has also varied over the years as to whether developmental courses should be required. By the early 1970s, Miami-Dade no longer required developmental instruction for students performing poorly on placement tests. Such scores were used for counseling purposes only. Beginning with the 1980s, the College once again required developmental courses for students showing deficient skills on placement tests.

Developmental courses have been taught in a variety of settings over the years. In the 1960s, they were taught primarily as lecture courses, with individualized help available in a laboratory setting. During the 1970s, developmental courses were taught almost exclusively using a lab-tutorial format. By the 1980s, most of the campuses had adopted the combination lecture/lab format currently in use. A primary impetus for this change was newly enacted state rules requiring doubling the contact hours necessary for developmental courses.

After initial placement, further reassessment usually takes place within the first week of class. Such reassessment is used not only for diagnostic purposes but also to refine the placement process. In writing courses, a

holistically scored writing sample is administered to further assess students' skills in this area. Students are strongly encouraged to enroll in lower level courses if the writing sample shows the student lacks the necessary skills.

A similar process takes place in reading courses, where the Nelson-Denny Reading Test is used by most campuses to refine placement and for diagnostic purposes. In mathematics, a locally developed test is utilized at each campus, except for the Wolfson Campus where no reassessment is mandated.

Although the College's developmental communications programs (i.e., reading and writing) are taught from the same course descriptions, there are some variations across campuses. A primary difference is that placement scores within the developmental areas are not uniform. Two students with the same scores may be placed in different courses at different levels depending on the campus.

The campuses also differ somewhat on their approach to developmental instruction. On the Medical Center Campus, a "mentor" program is currently being developed. This program will assign an instructor as a mentor to each student in the developmental program to act as advisor and counselor. By emphasizing the relationship between students and instructors, this program will attempt to facilitate movement through the developmental program.

At the North Campus, an Information Skills Lab is required of all students taking a developmental reading or writing course. This lab focuses on the improvement of skills appropriate to college-level functioning, such as effective library use, survival skills, critical reading, problem-solving, and logical reasoning.

At the Wolfson Campus, a Multi-Skills Lab offers instructional support and tutorial assistance for each developmental communications course. In a three credit course, students spend three hours a week in the classroom and an

additional three hours of instruction in the lab, where they undergo the drill and practice necessary to improve skills. The lab also offers individualized instructional prescriptions conducted in a tutorial or small group setting under the supervision of a learning manager.

As with reading and writing, developmental computation courses vary somewhat in operation across campuses. At North Campus, MAT 0003 (Mathematics Skills) requires a three hour lecture and a two hour lab. Medical Center and South Campuses rely primarily on a laboratory approach, while at the Wolfson Campus the lab is utilized to supplement classroom instruction.

Most of the developmental courses use some type of exit tests to evaluate students. These exit tests range from standardized instruments, such as the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, to a holistically scored essay in writing and locally developed tests in computation.

Students in the developmental program are graded using a non-traditional system. An "S" is earned when the student has successfully mastered the material and is ready to advance to the next level. A "P" indicates that while a student may have made significant gains, more work is needed before mastering the necessary skills. Although this grade usually requires that the course be repeated, it serves to reinforce significant effort and acknowledge improvement for a student with serious deficiencies which cannot be remediated in a single term. A grade of "U" indicates that progress has been unsatisfactory and requires that the course be repeated.

The ESL Program

History and Development. The predecessor of the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program at Miami-Dade began in 1967 with a speech course entitled "Speech for Foreign Students" (Rivas, 1980). With the continuous flow of

refugees and immigrants from Cuba, Haiti, Central and South America, this program expanded significantly in the ensuing years.

By the early 1970s, course offerings had evolved into four levels of instruction. Each level included a course in speech, grammar, reading, and writing. In some cases, a listening lab was also included. Initial placement in one of the four levels was determined by test scores. Level I was for students with minimal English language skills. Students advanced to each higher level as they attained more proficiency in the language. The main purpose of this ESL program was to prepare students to function at a college level and be able to succeed in mainstream college courses.

This academically oriented ESL program has had only a few modifications since the early 1970s. These modifications included introduction of a writing lab and an intensive version of the ESL program. This latter innovation, initiated at the Wolfson Campus, allowed students to advance faster by using an immersion-type mode of instruction. By the early 1980s, South Campus offered its own version of an intensive program.

Recognizing that all students were not interested in pursuing a college education, the Wolfson Campus was the first to offer what has been referred to as a Track II ESL Program. Track II emphasizes English-language skills for everyday living, to secure employment, for promotion on the job, or for integration into the community. South Campus is also experimenting with Track II.

Description of the Current ESL Program

As specified earlier, the ESL program consists of four levels, each composed of four courses in grammar, speech, writing, and reading. Initial placement is accomplished via scores from the EPT. After initial placement, reassessment of skills is accomplished in a manner similar to that described in

the developmental program. Students are recommended for reassignment as appropriate.

Although actual instruction and course competencies are virtually the same collegewide, there are some campus differences. As indicated previously, only the Wolfson and South Campuses offer both an academic and non-academic ESL program. Further, completion of the intensive ESL program at the Wolfson Campus earns credit for two levels of ESL instruction while at South only one level is credited.

Key Evaluation Goals and Questions

Nine major goals were developed to evaluate the College's prescriptive education programs in developmental reading, writing, and computation courses, and ESL instruction. Collectively, these goals were to determine the attitudes of significant groups toward, and effectiveness of, the College's prescriptive education programs. Additional questions addressed diagnostic assessment used for prescription and reassignment within various levels, and measurement of exit competencies for students completing developmental and ESL coursework.

Both attitudinal and empirical data collection strategies were used to answer these questions. These strategies are discussed in detail in the following section of this report.

METHODOLOGY

Organization of the Committee

The Prescriptive Education Committee was comprised of 21 members. Each of the Miami-Dade campuses and several District offices were represented on the committee. Four members from each of the campuses (a total of 16), three District resource personnel, a representative from the Office of Institutional Research (IR), and a member of the College Self-Study Coordination Committee (SSCC), evaluated prescriptive education. To ensure an objective evaluation, more than half of the members were from areas other than those evaluated.

To expedite delegation of responsibilities, the committee was divided into two subcommittees. The Testing and Placement Subcommittee was composed of seven members: one member from each of the four campuses, a District staff person, the advisor, and the SSCC member. The Developmental Program and English as a Second Language (ESL) Subcommittee was further divided into three study groups: 1) developmental communications (verbal and writing instruction), 2) developmental computation courses, and 3) the ESL program. A total of 14 College staff participated in these three study groups.

Each subcommittee was coordinated by a chairperson who directed the activities of the group, with each campus contributing a chairperson and a writer to the Prescriptive Education Committee. The committee was directed by a collegewide chairperson, with the SSCC member functioning as resource person.

Development of Evaluation Issues

The specific evaluation questions were identified by the Prescriptive Education Committee through two survey questionnaires constructed by the SSCC. Results from the faculty, staff, and administrator survey, entitled Suggested

Questions and Issues for Self-Study Research, were combined with those from a student version of the same questionnaire. Evaluation questions suggested by personnel and students were prioritized and supplemented by issues identified by committee members.

The evaluation questions addressed by the committee included issues which had not been previously investigated by the College. Issues previously addressed required reviewing and reporting relevant information from existing IR reports. The remainder of the evaluation issues required the collection of new data, principally by surveying significant target groups. The result of this process was the nine major evaluation issues listed below.

Goal 1: To determine the attitudes of significant groups toward placement testing at Miami-Dade.

Goal 2: To evaluate the effectiveness of the entry-level placement program at Miami-Dade.

Goal 3: To determine the effectiveness of the ESL placement program at Miami-Dade.

Goal 4: To evaluate the effectiveness of the developmental program at Miami-Dade.

Goal 5: To determine the extent to which additional testing is used subsequent to initial placement into developmental courses.

Goal 6: To evaluate the use of exit tests in developmental courses offered at Miami-Dade.

Goal 7: To evaluate the effectiveness of the ESL program at Miami-Dade.

Goal 8: To determine the use of additional testing subsequent to initial placement within ESL courses.

Goal 9: To evaluate the use of exit tests utilized in ESL courses.

Data Sources and Target Groups

Four surveys were constructed by the committee (two from each subcommittee) and administered to currently enrolled students and College faculty. These questionnaires focused on the effectiveness of the placement, developmental, and

ESL programs. Items provided by the committee were included on nine community surveys conducted by the SSCC. These items focused on whether it was appropriate for the College to: 1) be more directive in terms of the academic choices of students; 2) require students to pass a placement test prior to entering the College; 3) require developmental course work for students not passing the placement test; and 4) utilize placement testing at the College. These surveys are described further in Volume I.

Extensive research reports prepared by IR were also systematically reviewed. A literature search was conducted for projects having relevance to the effectiveness of testing and placement, the developmental program, and ESL instruction. Reports given priority included those concerning the entry-level testing program, success of underprepared students, and performance of various student groups on the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST).

Data were also collected by committee members using information contained within various computer files maintained by the College. These supplemental analyses included computer runs to determine the proportion of underprepared and ESL students who graduated from the College, the success and retention rates of students enrolled in developmental and ESL courses, and CLAST performance of students who completed developmental and/or ESL coursework.

Sampling Methods and Data Analyses

The faculty and student surveys developed by the committee were administered at each campus by the subcommittee chairperson. The testing and placement faculty survey was distributed to one-third of the full-time faculty teaching in the Spring and Fall Terms of 1984. Approximately 400 faculty provided information concerning the College's testing and placement program. A total of 103 developmental staff were surveyed by the Developmental and ESL Subcommittee in the Fall Term of 1984.

Students were surveyed in class during both the Spring and Fall Terms of 1984. Almost 1,000 students enrolled in a variety of classes (i.e., a general student sample) completed the Testing and Placement Subcommittee's survey, while approximately 1,500 students enrolled in developmental and ESL courses answered questions about the course in which they were surveyed.

All multiple choice items from both faculty and student surveys were coded and entered into the College's mainframe computer. Data input was accomplished by use of the ADDERS software package on Telex Display terminals, while data output was generated utilizing the Statistical Analysis System and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Narrative and fill-in items were also coded and returned to subcommittee members for analysis, along with printouts depicting results from multiple-choice items.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Results for this report are presented separately for the nine evaluation goals under study. Demographic data for the groups surveyed are discussed, followed by review of existing research and data compiled and analyzed by the Prescriptive Education Committee. Findings include tabular data, narrative descriptions, and evaluative conclusions derived from both empirical and attitudinal data. Data are mostly presented on a collegewide basis with salient differences among significant groups highlighted where appropriate. All survey data are reported in percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Unless otherwise indicated, "unsure" and "unable to answer" responses were considered valid and are included in the percentages reported.

Demographic Data for Groups Surveyed

All surveys contained demographic items describing the various groups sampled. However, specific survey items were analyzed by selected demographic variables only. In most cases, these variables were campus, teaching area, and ethnic group. Data were further analyzed using chi-square analyses to determine statistically significant differences in response patterns across these variables. It was necessary to collapse categories (e.g., combining "strongly agree" and "agree" responses) in some cases to avoid having more than 20% of the cells with fewer than five cases.

Representative samples from eight community groups were surveyed regarding the College's educational reforms over the past ten years. These groups included recent Miami-Dade graduates, CLAST examinees, local employers, high school counselors, staff from local postsecondary institutions (Southeast Florida Educational Consortium, SFEC), local elected officials, members of

various advisory councils, and the general public. Survey data for these groups are presented together except as noted.

The demographic data in Table 1 indicate that the survey samples were generally representative of all Miami-Dade students. However, older students may have been under-represented, since the average age of students attending the College is about 28. In the survey samples, the average age was approximately 23.

Table 2 presents demographic data for the faculty groups. Variables such as sex, ethnic group, and age, were not included on the faculty surveys. Although ESL faculty may have been over-represented in the developmental/ESL survey, the samples appeared to be representative of the faculty teaching at the College.

Testing and Placement (Goals 1-3)

GOAL 1: TO DETERMINE THE ATTITUDES OF SIGNIFICANT GROUPS TOWARD PLACEMENT TESTING AT MIAMI-DADE.

With the educational reforms of the past few years, which have included placement testing, the College has become more directive regarding the academic options of students. Survey results summarized in Tables 3, 4, and 5 revealed that the various constituencies at the College support such an approach. Among community groups, approximately 76% agreed that greater control over the academic choices of students was a step in the right direction. Support was also high among faculty (73%) and students (53%). A majority of students in developmental courses (60%), (i.e., those most directly affected), also supported such actions.

Use of Placement Tests. Results also indicated broad support for the use of placement tests at Miami-Dade (Table 6). This support was most evident among

TABLE 1
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS COMPLETING
SELF-STUDY SURVEYS ADMINISTERED BY THE
PRESCRIPTIVE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC	DEVELOPMENTAL/ESL SAMPLE		TESTING/PLACEMENT SAMPLE	
	n	%	n	%
CAMPUS				
North	480	32	312	33
South	531	36	317	34
Wolfson	391	26	214	23
Medical	91	6	96	10
Total	1493	100	939	100
DEVELOPMENTAL AREA				
Reading	390	27		
Writing	262	18		
Computation	310	21	N/A	
Other	32	2		
ESL	459	32		
SEX				
Male	606	42	369	39
Female	844	58	575	60
ETHNICITY				
White Non-Hispanic	186	14	261	28
Black Non-Hispanic	320	23	160	17
Hispanic	739	54	472	50
Other	121	9	47	5
NATIVE LANGUAGE				
English	417	29	498	53
Spanish	784	54	390	41
Other	256	18	56	6
CREDITS COMPLETED				
Below 16	951	68	327	35
Over 16	440	32	601	65
DEGREE GOAL				
AA	766	56	574	62
AS	429	31	243	26
Other	185	13	102	11
AVERAGE AGE	23.1 years		22.5 years	
AVERAGE CREDIT LOAD	10.1 credits		9.0 credits	

NOTE: n's may not sum to 1,493 for the Developmental/ESL sample nor to 944 for the Testing/Placement sample due to missing data (i.e., student failing to answer an item).

TABLE 2

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF COLLEGE PERSONNEL COMPLETING THE SELF-STUDY SURVEYS ADMINISTERED BY THE PRESCRIPTIVE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC	DEVELOPMENTAL/ESL SAMPLE		TESTING/PLACEMENT SAMPLE	
	n	%	n	%
CAMPUS				
North	19	18	115	29
South	40	39	159	40
Wolfson	27	26	61	15
Medical	7	7	63	16
Outreach	10	10	--	--
Total	103	100	398	100
INSTRUCTIONAL SPECIALTY				
Reading	11	11	--	--
Writing	21	20	--	--
Computation/Math	18	18	33	8
ESL	43	42	22	6
Language Arts	--	--	65	17
Core Courses	--	--	64	16
Other	10	10	207	53
YEARS OF SERVICE				
Below 5 years	46	45	52	14
5 - 10 years	27	26	101	26
Over 10 years	29	28	232	60
ACADEMIC RANK				
Instructor	29	31	33	8
Assistant Professor	18	19	68	18
Associate Professor	16	17	92	24
Professor	13	14	191	49
Part-time Faculty	17	18	5	1

NOTE: n's may not sum to 103 for the Developmental/ESL sample nor to 401 for the Testing/Placement sample, due to missing data.

TABLE 3

NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF "AGREE" RESPONSES FROM VARIOUS COMMUNITY GROUPS TO STATEMENTS CONCERNING PRESCRIPTIVE EDUCATION

AREA EXAMINED	COMMUNITY GROUP															
	LOCAL EMPLOYERS		HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS		SFEC MEMBERS		ELECTED OFFICIALS		ADVISORY BOARD		GENERAL PUBLIC		M-DCC GRADUATES		GROUPS COMBINED	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Community colleges should offer remedial classes	27	77	36	64	55	86	14	82	68	66	161	68	177	86	538	74
Community colleges should offer English as a second language (ESL) classes	27	77	36	66	56	89	14	82	65	63	167	70	155	75	520	72
More control over academic choices of students is a step in the right direction	30	88	41	77	47	76	12	80	80	78	N/A	N/A	128	62	338	70
Students should have adequate basic skills before enrolling in community college classes	28	80	36	64	29	45	11	65	86	83	201	84	152	73	543	75
The "open door" policy should be maintained	17	49	25	45	43	67	14	88	31	30	98	41	126	62	354	49

TABLE 4

NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF "AGREE" RESPONSES FROM COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF TO STATEMENTS CONCERNING PRESCRIPTIVE EDUCATION

AREA EXAMINED	CAMPUS									
	NORTH		SOUTH		WOLFSON		MEDICAL		COLLEGEWIDE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
The more directive approaches implemented by the College have had a positive impact upon students	55	89	99	90	45	96	25	81	224	90
Students should pass a basic skills test before enrolling at the College	44	54	58	37	28	49	15	48	145	49
The College should continue offering developmental classes	74	92	119	91	55	95	30	97	278	92
Developmental courses are effective in assisting underprepared students compete in college-level courses	59	88	100	93	47	92	26	93	232	91
	(48 out of 303 or 16% responded "unable to answer")									
The College should continue offering ESL classes	73	94	109	84	54	95	24	80	260	88
ESL courses are effective in assisting non-native English speaking students compete in college-level courses	51	84	81	81	47	90	17	71	196	83
	(64 out of 303 or 21% responded "unable to answer")									
Placement test scores should be used for advisement only	33	46	56	50	25	45	7	24	121	45
Placement testing should not be used at the College	4	7	13	11	6	11	3	10	26	10
The College's placement testing program is effective	38	69	75	86	36	82	22	88	171	79
	(90 out of 303 or 30% responded "unable to answer")									
The "open door" should be continued at the College	53	65	99		40	76	23	74	215	73

NOTE: The response categories of "strongly agree" and "agree" were combined across the three personnel classifications (administrators n=112, staff n=90, and classified staff n=101). Personnel responding "unable to answer" were excluded.

TABLE 5
NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF "AGREE" RESPONSES FROM
COLLEGE FACULTY TO STATEMENTS CONCERNING
TESTING AND PLACEMENT

AREA EXAMINED	CAMPUS									
	NORTH		SOUTH		WOLFSON		MEDICAL		COLLEGEWIDE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Students should pass a basic skills test before enrolling at the College	52	48	70	46	27	44	33	53	182	47
Placement testing should not be used at the College	5	4	7	4	3	5	0	--	15	4
Placement scores should be uniform throughout Florida	86	79	134	87	47	84	47	86	314	84
Developmental courses should be required.	109	94	145	92	59	95	60	98	373	94
Classroom performance is unrelated to placement test scores	20	20	31	22	14	28	7	12	72	2
Good high school grades should exempt students from placement testing	26	22	27	17	16	26	6	10	75	19
A.A. degree or higher should exempt students from placement testing	99	85	120	77	47	76	32	52	298	75
Placement policies are applied consistently	26	51	36	45	15	46	13	31	90	44
Placement policies should be applied consistently	113	98	155	98	57	93	56	92	381	96
Placement test scores should be used for advisement only	23	20	30	19	10	17	9	15	72	18
The College should continue offering developmental classes	103	89	148	96	60	98	58	94	369	94

TABLE 5 (continued)

NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF "AGREE" RESPONSES FROM COLLEGE FACULTY TO STATEMENTS CONCERNING TESTING AND PLACEMENT

AREA EXAMINED	CAMPUS									
	NORTH		SOUTH		WOLFSON		MEDICAL		COLLEGEWIDE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
The more directive approaches implemented by the College have had a positive impact upon students	87	84	110	85	46	88	44	90	287	86

NOTE: The response categories of "strongly agree" and "agree" were combined.

TABLE 6

NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF "AGREE" RESPONSES FROM
STUDENTS TO STATEMENTS CONCERNING TESTING AND PLACEMENT

ITEM	CAMPUS									
	NORTH		SOUTH		WOLFSON		MEDICAL		COLLEGEWIDE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Must pass basic skills assessment to enroll at Miami-Dade	205	64	205	66	150	66	42	51	602	64
Placement testing should not be used	99	31	79	26	82	39	38	49	298	33
Scores should be used for advisement only	226	75	209	73	157	73	64	79	656	74
Placement scores should be uniform throughout Florida	237	78	256	86	177	84	63	86	733	83
Developmental courses should be required	279	87	259	86	193	85	70	85	801	86
Classroom performance is unrelated to placement test scores	170	61	173	63	133	68	51	73	527	64
Not enough time to complete placement tests	183	66	156	59	148	77	57	71	544	67
Advisor explained scores satisfactorily	156	60	142	56	104	57	47	60	449	58
Good high school grades should exempt students from placement testing	110	34	95	31	97	42	36	44	338	36
A.A. degree or higher should exempt students from placement testing	204	69	216	71	166	74	58	72	644	71

TABLE 6 (Continued)

NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF "AGREE" RESPONSES FROM
STUDENTS TO STATEMENTS CONCERNING TESTING AND PLACEMENT

ITEM	CAMPUS									
	NORTH		SOUTH		WOLFSON		MEDICAL		COLLEGEWIDE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Increased structure by College has been positive	169	80	167	82	111	85	45	79	492	80
College-level reading courses helped in later courses	63	82	45	73	59	79	23	72	190	77
Developmental reading courses helped in later courses	70	83	34	68	59	69	30	83	193	76
Developmental math courses helped in later courses	71	86	61	74	61	75	30	86	223	79
Developmental writing courses helped in later courses	79	89	62	74	73	81	28	80	242	81
ESL courses helped in later courses	39	74	37	92	73	90	11	69	160	84

NOTE: The response categories of "strongly agree" and "tend to agree" were combined. Students responding "unable to answer" were excluded.

faculty (96%) and staff (71%), who favored their use by an overwhelming majority. Although support was stronger among white students (72%), a majority of Black and Hispanic students (60% and 61%, respectively) also supported placement tests, even though these groups historically have been most affected by their use.

Opinion was more divergent regarding how placement testing should be used. A majority of students (62%) and of respondents from the community groups (70%) indicated that students should not be permitted to enroll at Miami-Dade unless they have adequate basic skills. Forty-five percent of Miami-Dade faculty and 30% of students enrolled in either developmental or ESL courses also held this opinion.

These figures appear to show less than overwhelming support for the open door policy among the College's major constituencies. Other results further reinforced this finding. Although the majority (68%) of the College administrators and staff favored keeping the open door, this was less than the overwhelming majority that might be expected of staff working in a community college.

Among the eight community groups, an average of 56% favored keeping the open door. However, fewer than half of the members of the advisory councils (30%), local employers (49%), high school counselors (45%) and the general public (41%) favored the open door. Only elected officials (88%), recent graduates (62%), CLAST examinees (67%), and members of local post-secondary institutions (67%) favored keeping the open door. These results point to a need for the College to communicate more effectively to its varied constituencies the important role an open door admissions policy plays in its educational mission.

However, other results point to possible misinterpretation regarding these issues. For example, an average of 77% of community respondents supported the

offering of developmental courses by Miami-Dade. Seventy-five percent supported offering ESL courses. It is precisely students served by these programs who would be prevented from enrolling if passing a basic skills test were required or if the open door were eliminated. It thus appears that many respondents may not have considered the consequences of favoring a more restrictive admissions policy.

Both faculty (93%) and students (82%) agreed that basic skill courses should be required for students with skill deficiencies as identified by test scores. However, when the issue was addressed differently, the two groups diverged. Only 18% of the faculty indicated that placement scores should be used solely for advisement with final course selection left to the students, while among students this figure was 68%.

Some differences of opinion between students and faculty were also evident concerning which courses should require passing scores prior to the student enrolling. Both faculty (96%) and students (86%) supported using such scores in writing (ENC 1101) and mathematics (MAT 1024). However, as shown in Table 7, more than 60% of faculty also favored requiring passing scores prior to enrolling in social science (PSY 1000, SSI 1120), humanities (HUM 1020), and natural science (PSC 1515) courses while fewer than 30% of the students favored such action.

GOAL 2: TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ENTRY-LEVEL PLACEMENT PROGRAM AT MIAMI-DADE.

The goal of a placement program is to determine which students are "ready" for college-level work and which are not. As outlined by Davis (1984a), "readiness" translates into successful performance in the course and "unreadiness" into poor performance. Ideally, a placement mechanism, in this

TABLE 7

PERCENT OF FACULTY WHO SUPPORT REQUIRING
PASSING SCORES PRIOR TO ENROLLING IN CORE COURSES

GENERAL EDUCATION CORE COURSE	COMMUNICATIONS FACULTY n=62	MATHEMATICS FACULTY n=31	CORE FACULTY n=60	OTHER FACULTY n=203	ALL FACULTY n=356
English (ENC 1101)	92%	97%	97%	98%	96%
Humanities (HUM 2570)	69%	71%	81%	52%	62%
Social Science (SS1 1120) (PSY 1000)	62%	71%	76%	52%	60%
Natural Science (PSC 1515)	68%	83%	83%	69%	72%
Mathematics (MAT 1024)	95%	100%	95%	97%	97%

case the Comparative Guidance and Placement Program (CGP), should accurately identify all persons who will be successful in a particular target course. Conversely, it should be expected that those not identified as "ready" should perform unsuccessfully.

To the extent that a placement mechanism meets these requirements, it may be considered valid. Each time a student performs as expected, the placement criterion is credited with a "hit." A hit may be credited either for a student who scores above the placement criterion and performs successfully in the course or for a student who scores below the criterion and performs poorly. By analyzing such data, it is possible to evaluate the accuracy, success rate, or validity of the placement criterion.

Empirical Data

Since 1981, the Research and Testing Committee has annually compiled data on the validity of the CGP. Results are used to establish the placement scores for the following year. These validity data have been of three types: 1) correlations between test scores and course grades, 2) regression analyses indicating score required for a grade of C, and 3) computation of the proportion of correct placements based on test scores.

The first validity study (Losak, 1981) correlated CGP Reading and Written English Expression (or Writing) test scores with grades in freshman English, humanities and social science courses, while computation test scores were correlated with grades in introductory algebra. Test score correlations with humanities and social science grades were included because these are required general education core courses for which adequate reading and writing skills are essential and because students enrolled were more likely to have broader range of skills since scores were not used as extensively to screen entrance to these

courses. Table 8 lists correlations between reading scores and grades, which ranged from low (.25 in Humanities 2570) to moderate (.42 in Social Science 1012). Correlations between writing scores and grades also ranged from low (.27 in Humanities 2570) to moderate (.39 in Social Science 1011). However, these correlations are quite comparable to those reported by over 40 junior and community colleges in the CGP norming sample. They are also quite comparable to correlations generated by other research studies using achievement tests to predict future course grades. These correlations indicate the presence of a positive relationship between test scores and performance in these courses.

An additional concern is the relative predictive validity of the CGP for different ethnic and age groups. Table 9 shows the correlations between test scores and course grades for White, Black, and Hispanic students indicating that, in most courses, the correlation (or validity) was actually higher for minority students, thereby indicating that test scores were a better predictor for these students. This table also indicates that predictive validity for older students was consistently better than for younger students, contrary to common belief. Although valuable as indicators of validity, correlations often lack the ease of interpretation necessary to make practical decisions. Therefore, data with a more direct application were also compiled.

One such measure is a regression analysis, which allows empirical determination of the minimum score required to at least earn a grade of C. The mean predicted minimum test scores (averaged for the five target courses) was 20.3 for the reading and 23.3 for writing, which were very close to the actual placement scores utilized (Table 8). For the computation test, however, the predicted placement score was four points below the then current placement score, which resulted in the score being lowered to 21 in 1982.

TABLE 8

REGRESSION OF CGP TEST SCORES
WITH GRADES IN SELECTED COURSES
FALL, 1980

	READING TEST			WRITTEN ENGLISH EXPRESSION TEST			COMPUTATION TEST		
COURSE	N[1]	r[2]	PREDICTED MINIMUM TEST SCORE[3]	N	r	PREDICTED MINIMUM TEST SCORE	N	r	PREDICTED MINIMUM TEST SCORE
ENC 1103	2,295	.28	21.0	2,296	.35	23.6	N/A	N/A	N/A
HUM 2511	1,448	.26	19.9	1,448	.28	22.9	N/A	N/A	N/A
HUM 2570	298	.25	22.3	298	.27	24.8	N/A	N/A	N/A
SS1 1011	2,475	.40	18.3	2,476	.39	21.8	N/A	N/A	N/A
SS1 1012	259	.42	19.8	259	.34	23.0	N/A	N/A	N/A
MAT 1024	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	430	.33	21.0
Mean Score			20.[illegible]			23.3			21.0

NOTE: Only grades of A, B, C and D were used in regression.

1 Number of students in regression.

2 Pearson correlation coefficient.

3 Test score most closely corresponding to a grade of C, based on regression equation.

Source: Losak, 1981

TABLE 9

CGP TEST SCORE WITH COURSE GRADE CORRELATIONS
BY ETHNIC GROUP AND BY AGE GROUP
FALL, 1980

COURSE	ETHNIC GROUP			AGE GROUP		
	WHITE NON-HISPANIC	BLACK NON-HISPANIC	HISPANIC	16 to 20	21 to 25	26+
			CGP READING TEST			
ENC 1103	.25	.17	.27	.25	.35	.52
HUM 2511	.16	.34	.32	.27	.21	.31
HUM 2570	.28	.41	.30	.33	ns	ns
SSI 1011	.32	.40	.37	.38	.36	.55
SSI 1012	.37	.49	.40	.41	.22	.48
			CGP WRITTEN ENGLISH EXPRESSION TEST			
ENC 1103	.32	.27	.32	.32	.38	.41
HUM 2511	.28	.31	.27	.29	.24	.42
HUM 2570	.32	.45	.32	.38	ns	ns
SSI 1011	.38	.35	.38	.38	.40	.48
SSI 1012	.36	.55	.35	.37	.13	.68
			CGP COMPUTATION TEST			
MAT 1024	.38	.57	.28	.35	ns	.82

Spearman correlation coefficient includes only those students with grades of A, B, C, or D.

Source: Losak, 1981

Another method is to compute the proportion of correct placements (i.e., "hit rate") using test scores. Over the last four fall terms, starting with 1981, the CGP has averaged a 75% hit rate in ENC 1101, with a high of 79% in 1982. The average hit rate in MAT 1024 was 68% over the same period. A decline in the hit rate for this course since 1981 may be related to the significant changes in the course content in the last several terms.

Similar data for the Reading test were not available, since no specific course was targeted. Unlike mandatory placement in writing and mathematics, students with deficient reading skills have not been consistently required to register for developmental course work. However, data from the most recent validity study (Davis, 1984a) addressed this issue. These data indicated that as reading scores increase, so does the percent of students achieving grades of A, B, or C in the general education core courses targeted.

Further, in each course there were a number of students who should have been precluded from enrollment due to their low scores (1-10). Faculty and advisors are empowered by Miami-Dade policy to override test scores in special cases. As a result, about 4% or 86 students falling in this low range were able to obtain faculty or advisor overrides. Only 47% or 40 students earned grades of A, B, or C.

In summary, there appears to be a relationship between reading score on the CGP and probability of success in general education core courses. The higher the reading score, the greater the chance of earning a grade of C or better. Even though students scoring in the lowest range (1-10) were to be locked out of core courses, they still comprised approximately 4% of the new freshman enrollment, indicating that the system was not totally rigid. Although less than half of these (47%) earned grades of A, B, or C, students who performed successfully would have been denied such a chance if the system did not retain sufficient flexibility.

Compliance with Placement Scores. Because of space limitations and instructor availability, the reinstatement of placement testing at Miami-Dade in 1980 was phased-in gradually (Losak and Morris, 1983b). As a result, compliance with placement scores was manually monitored. With the gradual onset of computer locks completed by Fall Term, 1983, monitoring became automated since students scoring at the developmental level were prevented from registering for college-level writing and mathematics courses. The result has been the very high level of compliance with placement scores shown in Table 10.

The proportion of eligible students enrolling in the developmental program during their first term has also increased over time. In the 1980 Fall Term, 52% of students eligible for developmental work enrolled in at least one such course during their first term (Losak and Morris, 1983b). This figure grew to 59% in the 1981 Fall Term and to 70% in Fall, 1982. Thus, the College is effectively encouraging students to begin their developmental coursework early in their college career.

Faculty Perceptions on the Validity of the CGP. Overall, faculty accepted the fundamental tenet of placement testing, namely that performance in class is related to test scores. Of the 386 faculty surveyed, only 18% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that performance in class is unrelated to scores. However, there was less support for this contention among communications faculty than among other faculty groups. Of the 64 faculty surveyed in this group, 27% felt that performance and scores were unrelated, compared with only 18% among other faculty.

This difference in attitude may be related to the opinion of many faculty that assessment of writing skills should include a writing sample. In fact, 76% of all faculty (88% among communications faculty) felt that a writing sample should have a role in the placement process, with almost half (48%) indicating

TABLE 10

STUDENT REGISTRATION IN ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS COURSES
BY PERFORMANCE ON THE CGP
FALL, 1983

ENGLISH COURSE[1] n=4177	WRITING SCORE 1-15	16-21	22-40	TOTAL
Developmental only	97%	84%	2%	42%
Developmental and ENC 1101 together	*	6%	*	2%
ENC 1101	2%	10%	98%	56%

MATHEMATICS COURSE[2] n=2681	COMPUTATION SCORE 1-15	16-20	21-35	TOTAL
Developmental only	99%	91%	3%	63%
Developmental and MAT 1024	*	*	*	*
MAT 1024	1%	8%	97%	36%

[1]Of the 6,131 students under consideration, 4,177 or 68% enrolled in a writing course. The remaining 32% did not register for such a course during Fall, 1983.

[2]Of the 6,131 students, 2,681 or 44% enrolled in a mathematics course. The remaining 56% did not register for such a course during Fall, 1983.

*Less than 1%

Source: Davis, 1984

that a writing sample should be used in conjunction with a standardized test such as the CGP. Thus, although the research literature and various campus-level studies (e.g., Steed, 1983) have indicated no significant gains in efficacy, obviously strong sentiment exists for its use among faculty, especially since the CLAST includes an essay section.

Inappropriate use of the CGP scores may also contribute to the perception of some faculty that scores and performance are unrelated. The CGP was not designed for effective placement of students at three different developmental levels in reading and writing as utilized at Miami-Dade. This is especially the case considering the narrow score ranges utilized. The reader should recall that minimum placement scores for college-level functioning were established following empirical verification of their validity. However, scores for specific course leveling within the developmental area have been set mostly by faculty consensus, without empirical data. In addition, placement at these levels has not always been consistent collegewide, further clouding the issue.

Table 11 presents faculty opinions regarding the present cut-scores for the CGP. The very large number of faculty responding "not sure" points to a need for increasing awareness of the College's placement policies. Among those responding, however, a greater number of mathematics faculty felt that cut-scores in their area were about right than did communications faculty.

Comparing these figures with results from a previous survey (Losak, 1981) indicated that no appreciable change in perception has occurred. Thirteen percent felt the reading score was about right in 1981, compared to 14% in 1984; 27% felt the writing score was about right in 1981, versus 25% in 1984.

Data in Table 12 reveal that a substantial number of faculty were unable to identify the proportion of students with inadequate skills enrolled in mathematics, writing, and core courses. Results by teaching area, however,

TABLE 11

FACULTY JUDGMENTS REGARDING THE APPROPRIATENESS
OF CGP PLACEMENT SCORES

RESPONSE	CGP WRITING FACULTY		CGP READING FACULTY		CGP COMPUTATION FACULTY		CGP ALGEBRA FACULTY	
	ALL	ENC	ALL	ENC	ALL	MAT	ALL	MAT
Much too high	*	2%	*	2%	*	0	*	0
A little too high	2%	3%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0
About right	19%	27%	17%	14%	20%	50%	16%	50%
A little too low	9%	23%	17%	34%	10%	31%	7%	28%
Much too low	10%	13%	6%	12%	3%	3%	1%	3%
Not sure	60%	32%	59%	36%	66%	12%	74%	19%

* Represents less than 1%

TABLE 12

FACULTY OPINIONS REGARDING THE PROPORTION OF
STUDENTS WITH INADEQUATE SKILLS
ENROLLED IN WRITING, CORE, AND MATHEMATICS COURSES

PERCENT WITH INADEQUATE SKILLS	WRITING COURSES				CORE COURSES				MATHEMATICS COURSES	
	ALL FACULTY n=386		COMMUNICATIONS FACULTY n=65		ALL FACULTY n=386		CORE FACULTY n=62		ALL FACULTY n=386	MATHEMATICS FACULTY n=31
0 - 20%	9%	(16%)	25%	(28%)	10%	(16%)	16%	(19%)	8% (20%)	22%
21 - 50%	31%	(55%)	40%	(45%)	40%	(62%)	57%	(66%)	24% (59%)	59%
51% or Above	16%	(29%)	23%	(26%)	13%	(20%)	13%	(15%)	9% (22%)	19%
Not sure	44%		12%		36%		14%		59%	0%

NOTE: Figures in parenthesis exclude respondents who answered "not sure."

indicated that according to most instructors, at least 20% to 50% of their students had inadequate skills. The distribution of grades in these courses, however, did not follow the expected pattern since on the average 67% of the grades are A, B, or C (Davis, 1984a).

Course reassignment based on further assessment in the classroom only partially explains this discrepancy since survey data suggested that reassignment affected no more than 25% of the students. Assuming these figures are accurate, grade inflation may provide at least a partial explanation. Results of a survey conducted by the Title III ENC 1131 Evaluation Project during Winter Term, 1982, also suggested that grade inflation may play a part in the grades assigned by faculty. Of the 30 English faculty surveyed, about one third indicated that they sometimes assigned passing grades to students with continuing skill deficiencies (Title III ENC 1131 Evaluation Project, 1982).

Student Perceptions on the Validity of the CGP. Of the 785 students surveyed, 64% felt that scores and classroom performance were unrelated. The faculty's own misgivings in this regard may contribute to the formation of these attitudes toward placement. Another contributing factor may be that fewer than half of all students surveyed (46%) indicated that an advisor explained to their satisfaction how their scores were going to be used in course selection. New efforts need to be directed toward communicating to students what their scores mean so that they fully understand their impact and relationship to class performance. However, lack of information on the part of many advisors, the very large numbers of students who need to be served during peak-periods, and the resulting "assembly-line" nature of the advisement and registration process do not encourage advisors to take the necessary time with each student. Despite these factors, most students (approximately 70%) indicated that the writing, reading, and mathematics courses they took based on test scores were appropriate given their level of academic skills.

Faculty Familiarity with the CGP. Most faculty surveyed reported being unfamiliar with the CGP. Table 13 reveals that, on the average, only about one-third of the faculty were at least somewhat familiar with each section of the test. Slightly fewer than half of the communications faculty reported being familiar with the writing and reading sections. These figures were significantly higher for mathematics faculty, where more than three-fourths reported being familiar with the computation and elementary algebra sections.

A survey conducted in conjunction with the first validity study (Losak, 1981) indicated that faculty were also largely unfamiliar with the CGP at that time. Comparing both sets of data, mathematics faculty have made the greatest gains in improving their familiarity with the computation section of the CGP (73% were largely unfamiliar in 1981 versus 6% in 1984). Although communications faculty also made significant gains, a substantial proportion were still largely unfamiliar with the CGP several years after its initiation. This points to a need for the institution to undertake a major effort to inform the faculty about the instrument utilized, especially those in areas most directly affected by placement testing.

Exemption and Re-Testing Policy. All groups surveyed were in agreement that high school performance should not exempt students from placement testing. Sixty-one percent of the students, 62% of College administrators, and 80% of the the faculty shared this view. The majority of faculty and students, however, felt that persons with an Associate in Arts or higher degree should be exempt from entry-level placement testing. This opinion, reflected by 75% of faculty and 68% of the students, is consistent with present College policy.

College policy does not provide for students to be retested on the CGP. Students are usually reassessed as necessary during the first week of classes after initial placement in reading, writing, and mathematics. Student

TABLE 13

FACULTY FAMILIARITY WITH THE CGP

EXTENT OF FAMILIARITY	WRITING TEST		READING TEST		COMPUTATION TEST		ALGEBRA TEST	
	ALL FACULTY n=384	COMMUNICATIONS FACULTY n=64	ALL FACULTY n=387	COMMUNICATIONS FACULTY n=64	ALL FACULTY n=385	MATHEMATICS FACULTY n=32	ALL FACULTY n=384	MATHEMATICS FACULTY n=32
Very Familiar	7%	14%	6%	8%	10%	50%	7%	44%
Somewhat Familiar	23%	45%	24%	44%	17%	44%	11%	38%
Largely Unfamiliar	21%	22%	19%	20%	15%	6%	12%	9%
Totally Unfamiliar	46%	10%	47%	22%	52%	0%	59%	9%
Not Sure	3%	5%	4%	6%	6%	0%	11%	0%

performance on these instruments in conjunction with other relevant data such as high school transcripts are utilized when students question their course placement based on CGP scores.

Miami-Dade students, however, favor a policy that would permit retakes for a number of reasons. As Table 14 indicates, the most frequent reason cited was illness. Logistical considerations have made it difficult to incorporate any of these considerations in a re-testing policy since they are not subject to easy verification and are susceptible to possible student abuse. Where test scores appear questionable, the College prefers to depend upon the professional judgements of faculty and advisors rather than on repeated testing. Nevertheless, a re-testing policy, independent of the specific provisions, should be established collegewide.

Reactions to the New State Entry-Level Test. Given the lack of familiarity with the principal placement tool used for the past five years, it was not surprising to find significant unfamiliarity with the new state entry-level test. Seventy-nine percent of the faculty reported being largely or totally unfamiliar with the test. Although there were no significant differences across teaching fields, mathematics faculty (26%) did report being more familiar with the test than other faculty (16%). This is consistent with previous findings indicating increased awareness of, and familiarity with, testing issues on the part of the mathematics faculty.

As a result of this unfamiliarity, 56% of the faculty were not able to indicate what effect it was likely to have on the placement of students (Table 15). Nevertheless, there was strong support among faculty (79%) and students (76%) for establishing uniform placement scores across the state.

TABLE 14

REASONS GIVEN BY STUDENTS
FOR RETAKING PLACEMENT TESTS

REASONS GIVEN	FREQUENCY	
	n	%
Sickness or health problems	674	74
Unprepared first time	477	52
Later grades showed test results were incorrect	459	50
Not enough time	373	41
Permit retakes until passing	263	29
Retake for any reason	152	17
No retakes for any reason	63	7

TOTAL n=910

NOTE: Students were asked to indicate all reasons that should be permissible.

TABLE 15

FACULTY OPINIONS REGARDING THE EFFECT OF THE STATE ENTRY-LEVEL TESTING PROGRAM

OPINION	FREQUENCY	
	n	%
Do not have sufficient information to respond	216	56
Depends on the cut-scores established by the state	56	15
Will assist in improving the quality of education	36	9
Will hurt the enrollment of minority students	30	8
Will improve the placement of students	26	7
Other	21	5

GOAL 3: TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ESL PLACEMENT PROGRAM AT MIAMI-DADE.

Unlike the extensive research conducted on the CGP, very little has been done regarding the English Placement Test (EPT) and its effectiveness as a placement tool for ESL courses. What exists is mainly small in scale, descriptive in nature, or less than methodologically rigorous. Nevertheless, approximately 6,200 students were tested and placed using this instrument during the 1983-84 academic year alone.

The Testing and Placement Subcommittee initially planned to gather empirical data on this issue. However, the diverse nature of the ESL placement process made this task difficult to accomplish within the time frame established for the preparation of this report. Therefore, an indepth study of ESL placement comprises part of the recommendations.

The only study conducted with the EPT (Romanik, 1983a) compared the effectiveness of a locally constructed placement test (Language Institute Test or LIT, Captan and Spitzer, 1981) with the EPT. Using random assignment, 131 students were tested on the EPT and 94 on the LIT at the Wolfson Campus during Spring/Summer Term, 1981. The placement scores used at the Language Institute were utilized to place students in an ESL grammar course (English Structure Patterns) at the level indicated by the EPT. Based on a small pilot study and in consultation with the Language Institute, placement scores were developed for the LIT for placement into the target course in a manner similar to the EPT.

Performance on this course was analyzed over two terms with students who never enrolled or who enrolled in a level different from that indicated by the tests excluded from the analysis. This reduced the initial number to 61 on the EPT and 29 on the LIT. Combining the data for all levels revealed a hit rate of 64% for the EPT versus 66% for the LIT.

A more comprehensive study of this issue is obviously required, though such a study may be hampered by the fact that placement policies are not uniform. This may provide, however, an opportunity to compare and contrast the various processes utilized if adequate methodological safeguards are included.

It should be recalled that previous efforts to establish uniform policies have not been successful. This is the case even though 95% of the faculty, including 100% of the ESL faculty surveyed, indicated that they strongly agreed or tended to agree that placement policies as a whole (not necessarily in ESL alone), should be uniform collegewide. A related item indicated that only 23% believed these placement policies were uniform at present.

Although only 23% of the general faculty were familiar with the EPT, this figure rose to 86% for ESL faculty. Though 54% of the ESL faculty strongly agreed or tended to agree that they were satisfied with placement in their area, this figure was lowest among all teaching areas analyzed.

The Developmental Program (Goals 4-6)

This portion of the results section presents findings for both areas of developmental instruction offered by the College--communications (i.e., reading and writing) and computation. Results from the surveys conducted by the Prescriptive Education Committee are preceded by a review of relevant College research reports where available under each of the three goals studied.

GOAL 4: TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM AT MIAMI-DADE.

By conducting a review of existing IR reports, four main issues emerged: 1) lack of definitive empirical research to determine the effectiveness of developmental instruction; 2) success of underprepared students entering the

College; 3) the high school education of students enrolled in developmental classes; and 4) academic standards as applied to students enrolled in developmental classes.

Existence of Empirical Studies. Two important factors emerged from a review of available literature regarding the effectiveness of developmental programming. Nationally, few truly experimental or scientific studies have been conducted to determine efficacy. Secondly, minimal evidence exists to substantiate the notion that underprepared students who successfully complete developmental classes are academically better prepared than those who do not (Kulik, Kulik, and Schwalb, 1983). These factors also have been recognized by IR (Losak and Morris, 1983a).

An ideal test to determine the effectiveness of developmental instruction is to randomly select and assign entering students to developmental and college-level courses and to monitor their performance over time (Losak and Morris, 1983b). Such a design has been infrequently used due to the notion that some students may be denied the educational strategy (developmental instruction) that they need in order to be academically successful. Some educators, however, contend that the institution does not know a student is being denied something of value until it is demonstrated in an empirical fashion that the intervention is indeed valuable. This type of empirical research design has not been implemented at Miami-Dade since 1970.

The assumption that students involved with remediation will perform better academically can, however, be addressed without relying solely upon a research design such as that mentioned above. Issues relating to the effectiveness of developmental programming can be studied by using research designs which are less than ideal but remain useful in making decisions about educational programs. Several research projects using such designs have been conducted by IR and have practical value to developmental instruction.

Success of Underprepared Students. Success of underprepared students has been evaluated by IR through examination of criterion variables including graduation rate, retention rate, and exit skills as measured by performance on the College-Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST). A general finding from such research indicates that Miami-Dade has been successful in serving students who would not have had the opportunity to graduate from college without the College's open access philosophy (Losak and Morris, 1982; Losak, 1984b).

Depending upon the degree of basic skill deficiency, as measured by the entry-level testing program, 8% to 20% of underprepared students graduate from the College within two years (Losak and Morris, 1982). While this may appear to be a low graduation rate, even considering most students do not graduate until completing three years of academic study, such students would not have had any chance of graduating from a school within the State University System (SUS), since their entering skills would have precluded their admission.

An analysis of 1983-84 graduates conducted by the Prescriptive Education Committee substantiates the notion that a considerable number of students would not have had the opportunity for a college education without an open door policy and that a number of underprepared students complete developmental courses and progress to the point of graduation. This analysis indicated (Table 16) that 1,289 or 34% of the students graduating during the 1983-84 academic year had taken at least one developmental course. In fact, 155 students (4%) had taken courses in all three areas of developmental instruction. Additional research is needed, however, to determine whether this trend continues for 1984-85 graduates who must achieve particular passing scores on CLAST, rather than merely take the test as required for the 1983-84 graduates.

Retention rates for underprepared students attending Miami-Dade are similar to those reported nationally for students who are full-time new freshmen

TABLE 16

A COMPARISON OF DEVELOPMENTAL COURSEWORK
COMPLETED BY 1983-84 MIAMI-DADE GRADUATES

NUMBER OF DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS	NUMBER	PERCENT
One Area	759	20
Two Areas	375	10
Three Areas	155	4
Sub-Total	1,289	34
No Areas	2,462	66
Total	3,751	100

Source: Student transcript records of Miami-Dade Community College.

attending open door public two-year colleges: not more than one-third graduate (Losak and Morris, 1982). Additional research has studied the retention patterns of all new freshmen students participating in the entry-level testing program during Fall Term, 1980 (Morris, 1982). This research found that students scoring below the passing score on at least one of the three CGP subtests were much more likely to return the following term if they were enrolled in a combination of courses which included developmental coursework. That is, students enrolled in developmental and general education courses had better retention rates than students enrolling solely in either general education, developmental, or elective courses. Therefore, the data indicate that retention rates for underprepared students were optimized if students selected a mixture of courses during their first term in college.

An additional study (Losak and Morris, 1983) reported that students enrolling in two or three developmental courses in their first term were more likely to drop out and had a lower graduation rate than students enrolling in a single developmental course. In fact, students who "self-selected" out of developmental courses were more likely to graduate and had a lower attrition rate than those students who followed the advice of their counselor and enrolled in developmental work. Results such as these must be interpreted very carefully, since the most reasonable conclusion to be drawn is that students with severely deficient skills (e.g., those requiring two or three developmental courses) are less successful than those requiring less remedial instruction. Students selecting out of developmental courses may not only require less remediation as a group, but also may differ on several characteristics important to success in college, such as motivation, previous education, future academic plans, and attitudes toward school.

The CLAST was designed by the State of Florida to measure competencies in reading, writing, and mathematics required for students entering their junior year. Community college students must write the examination in order to receive an Associate in Arts degree, while SUS students must take the examination before advancing to the junior year. Passing scores were in effect as of August, 1984. The analyses of CLAST scores represents an on-going IR project. Several studies have assessed the differences between students who pass and fail the various CLAST subtests (Losak, Morris, and Leone, 1983; Losak and Morris, 1983a; Losak, 1984; Belcher, 1984b).

These CLAST studies have emphasized identifying student factors that impact performance and that could be influenced or changed by the College. Despite the fact that 17% of those students scoring in the top one-third on the CLAST enrolled in at least one developmental course (Losak, 1983), findings from transcript analyses have tended to indicate that a sample of "failers" were more likely than "passers" to have enrolled in developmental reading, writing, and computation courses (Belcher, 1984a). Of a sample of students who failed two of the four CLAST subtests during the June 1984 administration, 64% had enrolled in a developmental writing course, while only nine percent of the sample of "passers" had taken developmental writing.

Using a criterion of passing three of the four CLAST subtests, Losak (1984a) found virtually no difference in the pass rate between students who did not complete versus those who completed only one developmental course. However, this rate dropped dramatically for those students who completed two developmental courses. Using the criterion of passing all four of the CLAST subtests, a large difference occurred between pass rates of students completing one developmental course (58%) and those students not completing any developmental courses (74%). Results also indicated that there was a distinct

possibility that if a student had weak entry skills in one area, that area remained weak and was the one failed on the CLAST.

These findings are not presented to highlight the lack of effectiveness of developmental instruction. Developmental students generally tend to have deficient exit skills resulting from entry skills which necessitated developmental coursework in the first place. Such a finding substantiates the view that there are no over-night successes: to upgrade skills necessary for college-level courses within a matter of months when years of previous instruction had failed to do so may be unrealistic for many students.

However, some students can remediate severely deficient basic skills and eventually perform well on a common exit measure (CLAST) Findings of a cohort analysis conducted by Belcher (1984b) indicated that for some students it was not too late to remediate basic skill deficiencies at the time they entered college. Almost one-third of those students requiring remediation who entered the College during Fall Term of 1981 and later took the CLAST passed all four subtests. However, future research is needed: first, to determine whether the remediation occurred as a result of developmental classes or from enrolling in other college-level courses; and second, to determine what makes this group of students different from those entering the College with similar skills, but never progress to the point of taking or passing the CLAST.

Students who require or have enrolled in developmental coursework generally have lower CLAST scores than students who do not require such academic remediation. However, Losak (1984a) reported that over 85% of these students passed reading, almost 65% passed writing, and 78% passed the computation subtests during the October 1983 CLAST administration. The fact remains that passing rates for students never receiving or requiring remediation were higher than for those for the group of underprepared students who received remediation

in the academic area(s) required. The passing rates of underprepared students on this common exit exam are regarded as quite high, particularly considering that they would not have had the opportunity to acquire a college education from an institution without an open access policy.

Results from a study conducted by Romanik, Elkin, Schwartz, and Steed (1983) tended to support the efficacy of developmental reading instruction for students scoring below the placement level on the CGP Reading subtest. Despite the inability to establish a direct cause-and-effect relationship based upon the research design used, a considerably larger proportion of students completing a developmental reading course (i.e., REA 0001 or REA 0002) successfully completed one of the four general education courses with A, B, or C grades when compared to students who failed or did not participate in developmental reading instruction.

The largest success rate difference, in favor of students who completed developmental reading, occurred in Psychology 1000. A total of 656 entering freshmen students scored below the developmental placement level on the CGP Reading subtest and enrolled in this particular core course during the Fall Term of 1982. Nearly half of these students (307 or 47%) also enrolled in developmental reading courses. Students passing the developmental reading course had a considerably higher success rate (viz., 132 out of 176 students or 75%) than did students not passing or never enrolling in developmental reading (247 out of 480 students or 52%).

Similar success rate differences, in favor of developmental reading course completers, were also found for the other three core courses studied: Social Science 1120 (60% vs. 47%); Humanities 1120 (73% vs. 55%); and Physical Science 1515 (55% vs. 38%). Therefore, it appears that for students scoring below the CGP Reading cu ff score, successful completion of developmental reading

improved their chances for success in the four general education courses studied.

Adherence to Academic Standards. Analysis of CLAST scores has also addressed the issue of academic standards concerning grades in English and math courses. Belcher (1984a) indicated that a sample of "failers" had attained surprisingly high grades in English courses, 49% having an average grade of C. Compared to English grades, however, math grades seemed less "inflated." This disparity was attributed to the grading criteria being more specific or distinct in mathematics as opposed to English courses. The author concluded that "...results have consistently shown that large numbers of students are being awarded passing grades in (college-level) courses which do not reflect achievement of the minimum basic skills required by CLAST" (Belcher, 1984a, p. 4).

The need to challenge students and to adhere to high academic standards in both college-level and developmental courses has been highlighted by several authors (Conrad and Hammond, 1984b; White, 1984; and Green, 1985). This has clearly been a major national issue in higher education for the past two decades. One point of view was recently expressed in an article appearing in The Chronicle of Higher Education:

> We don't know how far institutions or individual faculty members compromise academic standards to accommodate such (underprepared) students--most of us would rather not know (Green, 1985, p. 96).

This argument assumes that standards have declined primarily because of underprepared students entering college-level courses, and that by excluding such students standards will improve. Educators themselves must, however, take the responsibility for making both developmental and college-level classes challenging.

A survey of students enrolled in developmental classes at Miami-Dade (Morris and Losak, 1982) supported this view, indicating that they felt their high school education did not challenge them enough, and that they did not have a clear educational direction while in high school. This study also pointed out that students had very little understanding of what college-level work was really like and that the College and school system needed to coordinate efforts in preparing students for college.

Survey work conducted by Wright (1984) with students taking the March 1984 CLAST indicated that over 85% of the 772 students expressing an opinion felt that the College maintained high standards of academic performance throughout the institution, although fewer than one-third felt the standards set by most of their instructors were particularly hard to achieve.

Table 17 presents recent information collected by the Prescriptive Education Committee regarding the success and retention rates for a sample of underprepared students enrolled in developmental courses. Grades earned do not confirm the view that the majority of underprepared students were successful in their developmental studies. In fact, only 246 or 23% of the 1,067 students sampled, enrolled in developmental writing courses during the Fall Term of 1984, successfully completed the course within that term. The majority of developmental writing students earned P or progress grades, indicating that additional developmental writing coursework was required before progressing to the regular college-level communication sequence.

Despite the large proportion of S or satisfactory grades, students enrolled in developmental computation courses also earned the largest proportion (22%) of U or unsatisfactory grades and W or withdrawals (19%). This finding may support the results of Belcher (1984a), indicating that developmental math grades tended to be less "inflated," possibly due to distinct grading criteria available to

TABLE 17

GRADE DISTRIBUTIONS AND SUCCESS/RETENTION RATES
FOR A SAMPLE OF MIAMI-DADE STUDENTS
ENROLLED IN DEVELOPMENTAL CLASSES
DURING FALL TERM, 1984

DEVELOPMENTAL AREA	GRADE									
	S (SATISFACTORY)		P (PROGRESS)		U (UNSATISFACTORY)		W (WITHDRAWAL)		RETENTION RATE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Reading	532	46	347	30	140	12	148	13	1030	87
Writing	246	23	548	52	122	12	148	14	916	86
Computation	422	46	117	13	202	22	173	19	743	81
Total	1200	38	1012	32	464	15	469	15	2689	85

NOTE: "Retention" included all students who withdrew after the 100% refund period. The sample included all students receiving grades in developmental or ESL classes conducted at the North, Wolfson or Medical Center Campuses during Fall Term, 1984. Wolfson Campus students receiving math grades under the A through F grading system were excluded from this analysis.

Source: Miami-Dade Community College 84-1 Grade List Summary.

faculty teaching developmental computation courses (e.g., the right or wrong nature of mathematical computations). Common exit-level competencies used collegewide for all developmental areas might prove especially helpful to faculty teaching developmental writing courses.

The empirical research reviewed, therefore, tends to support the view that the College shares in the national concern of postsecondary educational institutions to maintain high standards of academic performance while also subscribing to an open access philosophy. It should also be emphasized that challenging academic standards apply to developmental programs and to college-level courses equally.

Future research might address areas including the proportion of students receiving P and U grades who actually succeed in the course after re-enrollment the following term, and the feasibility of constructing common exit criteria and examinations for all developmental areas. Additionally, research should also focus upon determining the actual success rate of students exiting developmental into the college-level communication, mathematics, and general education courses.

Attitudes Toward Developmental Instruction. Results from both developmental students and instructional staff surveys (Tables 18 and 19) administered by the Prescriptive Education Committee almost unanimously supported the effectiveness of the developmental programming offered at the College. A total of 1,324 or 93% of the students sampled indicated that the developmental course in which they were presently enrolled increased their chances of future academic success while only 231 or 16% of the students felt the course was "a waste of time." At least three-quarters of the students sampled indicated that they were receiving sufficient help from classroom faculty, laboratory, and tutorial staff to successfully complete the course;

TABLE 18

NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF "AGREE" RESPONSES FROM DEVELOPMENTAL/ESL STUDENT SURVEY ADMINISTERED BY THE PRESCRIPTIVE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ITEM	CAMPUS									
	NORTH		SOUTH		WOLFSON		MEDICAL		COLLEGEWIDE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Course increases chances of future success	424	95	465	92	353	95	82	92	1324	93
Attendance should be required	405	91	453	88	333	89	78	91	1269	90
Satisfactory performance in course	387	94	425	92	331	93	76	96	1219	94
Receiving sufficient help to pass course	400	90	423	86	320	88	85	97	1228	90
Instructor helpful in learning material	402	93	446	90	335	91	83	94	1266	92
Lab helpful in learning material	310	80	225	62	249	77	73	84	857	76
Texts and AV helpful in learning material	326	87	351	87	276	84	71	83	1024	85
Tutors helpful in learning material	284	82	188	77	242	86	46	88	760	83
Classmates helpful in learning material	209	54	267	62	176	57	50	64	702	60
Course is a waste of time and money	65	15	95	19	60	17	11	13	231	16
Developmental/ESL courses should be required	317	78	355	76	244	76	61	82	977	78
Placement scores should be for advisement only	286	73	325	71	220	68	50	63	881	69
Increased structure by College has been positive	290	86	301	95	219	83	58	91	868	89

TABLE 18 (continued)

NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF "AGREE" RESPONSES FROM DEVELOPMENTAL/ESL STUDENT SURVEY ADMINISTERED BY THE PRESCRIPTIVE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ITEM	CAMPUS								COLLEGEWISE	
	NORTH		SOUTH		WOLFSON		MEDICAL			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Class performance is unrelated to placement test scores	243	70	280	71	180	69	55	63	758	68
Not enough time to complete placement tests	364	82	384	76	260	75	72	82	1080	79
Advisor explained placement scores satisfactorily	298	71	294	63	209	62	55	66	856	65
College should not offer Developmental and ESL classes	83	20	103	22	57	16	18	22	261	20
Must pass placement tests before enrolling at the College	147	35	124	25	143	41	24	27	438	32
Could not complete college without developmental classes	320	78	262	65	265	78	57	69	904	72
Could not complete college without ESL courses	272	68	248	59	241	72	43	64	804	66

NOTE: The response categories of "strongly agree" and "tend to agree" were combined across the three areas of developmental instruction and ESL. Students responding "unable to answer" were excluded.

TABLE 19

NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF "YES" OR "AGREE" RESPONSES TO THE DEVELOPMENTAL/ESL INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF SURVEY ADMINISTERED BY THE PRESCRIPTIVE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ITEM	DEVELOPMENTAL AREA									
	READING		WRITING		COMPUTATION		ESL		AREAS COMBINED	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Additional testing used subsequent to initial placement	9	82	18	90	16	89	22	55	65	73
Additional testing effective	10	91	20	95	17	94	26	81	73	89
Writing sample used after initial placement	3	27	21	100	4	24	25	64	53	60
Existing course competencies effective	8	80	18	90	16	89	32	82	74	85
Exit tests are used	9	82	12	57	17	94	25	62	63	70
Academic support is available to students outside classroom	9	82	19	95	18	100	36	90	82	92
Disabled students receive required support	4	36	10	50	13	72	18	49	45	52
Placement into my area is satisfactory	6	54	14	67	15	83	22	54	57	63
Placement subsequent to my area/course is acceptable	6	54	13	62	13	72	16	40	48	53
Placement by own department is satisfactory	9	82	18	86	16	89	36	88	79	87
College should be more directive regarding required courses	9	82	18	86	15	83	23	58	65	72

TABLE 19 (continued)

NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF "YES" OR "AGREE" RESPONSES FROM DEVELOPMENTAL/ESL INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF SURVEY ADMINISTERED BY THE PRESCRIPTIVE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ITEM	DEVELOPMENTAL AREA									
	READING		WRITING		COMPUTATION		ESL		AREAS COMBINED	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
College should demand better performance from students	10	91	16	76	16	89	32	78	74	81
College should provide less classroom support to students	0	--	0	--	1	6	1	2	2	2
College should continue developmental courses	10	91	20	95	17	94	41	100	88	97
Developmental instruction is effective	11	100	21	100	14	78	33	80	79	87
College should continue to offer ESL courses	11	100	19	90	16	89	40	98	86	94
ESL instruction is effective	4	36	14	70	9	50	40	98	67	74
Must pass placement tests before enrolling at the College	2	18	8	40	4	22	14	35	28	32

NOTE: Items 10-16 required "yes" or "no" responses, while 18-28 required responses of "strongly agree" through "strongly disagree." Both "strongly agree" and "tend to agree" response categories were combined for the above data analysis. The above percentages include respondents who were "unable to answer" or "did not know," but exclude those not able to provide an answer to the item or who recorded their speciality area as other than reading, writing, computation or ESL.

that texts and audio-visual materials were helpful; that they were in favor of requiring attendance for developmental classes; and that the College should continue offering developmental courses such as the one in which they were enrolled. Additionally, over 70% believed that they could not complete college without developmental instruction. These results are presented for all students surveyed collegewide since there were only slight differences when comparing response tendencies across campuses.

Additional support for effectiveness of the College's developmental program, though not as strong as that reported for currently enrolled students, was discussed by Wright (1984) when surveying CLAST examinees. A total of 2,174 students were surveyed immediately following the October 1983 and March 1984 CLAST administrations. Of the students indicating completion of developmental courses, 55% reported that such instruction helped them obtain a letter grade higher in subsequent courses.

There appears to be a difference in opinion, however, concerning the degree of effectiveness when comparing these two groups. This difference (93% vs. 55%) may arise from the sample of students questioned and/or the manner in which they were surveyed. Judging the effectiveness of developmental instruction against a relatively ambiguous criterion such as "increased chances of future academic success," compared to a more specific and identifiable criterion such as "helped me obtain one letter grade higher in later courses," may account in part for this attitudinal difference. However, a distinct possibility exists that students progressing to the point of sitting for the CLAST may not attribute as much credit for their success to developmental instruction which they have received as do those students currently enrolled in developmental programs.

Instructional staff responsible for implementing various aspects of the developmental program concurred with the judgements of currently enrolled

students concerning effectiveness. A total of 79 or 87% of the staff surveyed indicated that the developmental instruction offered at the College was effective and 88 or 97% felt that the College should continue its commitment to such programming. These judgements were consistent across campuses and among staff representing the various instructional areas. At least 85% also indicated that they were satisfied with the existing course competencies and with the academic support available to students outside of the classroom. In contrast, however, only half (45 or 52%) of the developmental staff surveyed reported that disabled students received the level of support required. This finding might actually underestimate the need for such services, since neither disabled students nor staff responsible for working with disabled students were targeted to receive the developmental staff survey.

In the opinion of various community groups (Table 3), developmental instruction should be offered at the College. The samples of high school counselors and the general public agreed least with this view (64% and 68%, respectively) and Miami-Dade graduates most (86%). The opinion of the high school counselors concerning this issue may be related to the view that remedial instruction belongs at the high school rather than at the community college level.

The perceived effectiveness of the developmental programs was also reflected in the opinion of administrators and staff employed at the College (Table 4). Over 90% of the 303 administrators and staff sampled indicated that in their opinion developmental courses were effective in assisting underprepared students to compete in college-level courses and that such instruction should be continued at the College.

In conclusion, although there has not been a true empirical study addressing efficacy, attitudinal data overwhelmingly support the need for and

effectiveness of developmental instruction. In general, empirical studies have fallen short of truly scientific research designs, primarily resulting from hesitancy on the part of administrators to use random assignment of students as required by such research methods. Those studies that have been conducted tend to indicate that, as a group, underprepared students enter and graduate from the College with less advanced skills when compared to students who enter without requiring remediation. In contrast, however, a considerable number of underprepared students complete developmental courses and progress to graduation. Therefore, to deny these students an opportunity to succeed seems unfair not only to the students but to the community.

The examination concerning the effectiveness of developmental instruction presented in this report has developed as many questions as it has answered. The disparity between some of the empirical findings and attitudinal opinions indicates that the answer regarding the effectiveness of developmental instruction may fall closer to the middle rather than at either extreme. An issue possibly accounting for some of these differences and crucial to any empirical study of efficacy is the need for consensus among developmental staff and researchers concerning what constitutes successful completion of developmental instruction. An operational definition of this nature is required before additional research can move forward. A criterion-referenced definition seems preferrable to a personal development or progress model. Such a definition might prevent the possibility of a student who enters with seriously deficient skills, receiving a minimal passing grade in developmental courses and being certified as ready for college-level instruction by having progressed three or four grade levels in a single term. The use of some collegewide standard by which to judge exit skills of developmental students is also consistent with current discussions at the state level, which emphasize the need for exit-level competencies (Council on Instructional Affairs, 1984).

Obviously, there is a need for additional comprehensive empirical research to be conducted in this area at the College as well as at the national level. Further, new state rules may increase the number of students that will require developmental coursework. Compared to present patterns, these rules would cause a shift in enrollment toward developmental instruction. Estimates by Davis (1984b) indicated an increase in developmental courses of as much as 34% in reading, 41% in writing, and 87% in developmental computation. Thus, research in this area becomes even more important since more students may be affected. Such research may further improve a program of instruction which is currently perceived to be worthwhile and effective by the College, students, and the community at large. Members of the Prescriptive Education Committee feel strongly that Miami-Dade should be among those institutions at the forefront of this research effort.

GOAL 5: TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT TO WHICH ADDITIONAL TESTING IS USED SUBSEQUENT TO INITIAL PLACEMENT INTO DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES.

Empirical data were not available on this issue and therefore only results from surveys administered by the Prescriptive Education Committee are presented. A total of 43 or 86% of the developmental staff surveyed indicated that additional testing was used after initial placement (Table 19). Such testing seemed slightly more frequent within developmental writing (90%) and computation (89%) than in developmental reading courses (82%). This additional testing was judged effective by over 90% of the staff surveyed. The type of assessment most frequently used was a writing sample. Additional instruments mentioned by instructional staff included the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, which was used for refining placement within the two levels of developmental reading, and developmental computation tests developed by mathematics faculty.

Concerning the extent of students reassigned after initial placement, a total of 83% of the instructional staff reported that no more than one-quarter of the students were actually reassigned to another level of instruction. This is not an uncommonly large proportion of students, but does support the assumption that the collegewide entry-level placement program is considered a "rough cut," and that refinement of the placement or leveling may be desirable. The actual effectiveness of the reassignment process should be examined empirically in the future, however, since the entry-level placement program was not designed to make such fine discriminations as are required to place students within appropriate levels of developmental instruction.

GOAL 6: TO EVALUATE THE USE OF EXIT TESTS IN DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES OFFERED AT MIAMI-DADE.

A transcript analysis on a sample of 403 students who took the June 1984 CLAST was conducted by Belcher (1984a). An analysis of the transcripts for students who failed two or more CLAST sections indicated that their grades were somewhat higher in college-level English and mathematics courses than would be expected from their CLAST performance. Departmental examinations standardized collegewide were recommended in an effort to ensure that all students enrolled in the same course had achieved minimal competence commensurate with a grade of C. Belcher concluded that, "It is easier...to assess competence prior to awarding credit than it is to explain later that the credit was not a sufficient indication of competence and the student should be remediated" (1984a, p.5).

Similar departmental examinations also seem justified for students exiting developmental and entering regular college-level courses. Results from the survey of developmental staff indicated that a total of 38 or 76% of the staff used some form of exit testing. Such testing was mentioned most frequently

among instructional staff responsible for developmental computation courses (94%) and least frequently among staff involved with developmental writing (57%). The types of tests used most often to determine exit skills of students completing developmental courses included writing samples, the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, and those developed by faculty. The consistent use and effectiveness of such exit measures has not been determined, and therefore represents an area for additional empirical research. Collegewide standardization of such exit criteria should also be pursued.

The ESL Program (Goals 7-9)

This section of the report presents data on the ESL program at Miami-Dade. Where available, previous research and empirical findings are presented first, followed by survey data. This organization is retained for each of the three study goals related to ESL.

GOAL 7: TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ESL PROGRAM AT MIAMI-DADE.

Empirical research on the effectiveness of the ESL program has been very limited. There are no collegewide data on the attrition rate of ESL students, their performance on the CGP, or their performance in college-level courses. The exception to the above is data on the performance of these students on the CLAST, which have been recently compiled independently by both IR and the Prescriptive Education Committee. The other research that exists is primarily limited to small groups of students from a single campus.

The Prescriptive Education Committee planned to fill the gaps in this area by compiling data on these issues. However, it concluded that this was not feasible within the time available for the preparation of this report. Therefore, a comprehensive collegewide study of the ESL program is prominent

among the recommendations made. It is recognized that a uniform placement policy may be a prerequisite for such a study.

Attrition Rate for ESL Students. No data were available regarding the attrition rate of ESL students. Among the recommendations made is a study which would determine and analyze the following variables: 1) graduation rate, 2) proportion of ESL students entering college-level work, 3) proportion completing ESL, 4) registration rate from term to term, 5) proportion who withdraw from ESL courses and from the College. The Prescriptive Education Committee collected some data on selected aspects of these issues.

The data that follows were compiled on students registered for ESL and developmental courses during Fall Term, 1984 at the North, Wolfson, and Medical Center Campuses. Data for South Campus were not available. On the average, the withdrawal rate from ESL courses was 18%, slightly higher than for developmental students. However, a higher proportion of ESL students (69%) were successful in individual courses than developmental students (39%). This suggests either that ESL students were better able to learn the material in their courses than developmental students, or that grades were more inflated in the ESL program.

During the 1983-84 academic year, 343 or 24% of all students receiving degrees (AA, AS, AGS, and Planned Certificates) had enrolled in at least one ESL course. Of these students, 226 or 66% also registered for at least one developmental course. However, no data are presently available on the proportion of entering ESL students who eventually graduate. Further, the students referred to here graduated prior to the requirement of passing scores on the CLAST. Data about the performance of ESL students on the CLAST are presented later in this section.

Performance of ESL Students on the CGP. A significant problem in compiling data on this issue is defining an ESL student. For purposes of some data

presented in this report, ESL students have been operationally defined as having enrolled in at least one ESL course. This definition, however, is recognized as inadequate for determining the effectiveness of the ESL program. A methodologically sound study would investigate only ESL students who have successfully completed the recommended ESL curriculum. Depending on entry-level skills, such a curriculum could vary in duration and intensity. A method to consistently and accurately identify such students does not exist on a collegewide basis.

Due to the lack of adequate safeguards, too many ESL students are able to take the CGP and/or register for at least some college-level courses while still critically deficient in English language skills. The structure necessary to evaluate the ESL program accurately and fairly is missing. The reader is therefore cautioned to keep these considerations in mind when evaluating the data that follow. Though less than ideal, these data are presented to allow a sense of the task facing ESL students.

From the 1983-84 graduates, students having enrolled in at least one ESL course were identified and their performance on the CGP analyzed. The number and proportion of students passing each section of the CGP were as follows:

COMPUTATION		WRITING		READING	
70	45%	30	19%	23	15%

Seven percent passed all three sections, but it should be noted that many of these students may have taken the CGP prior to completing the recommended ESL curriculum.

Many ESL faculty feel that the CGP is not a fair measure of the academic skills of these students since the speeded nature of the test penalizes the second-language student. These faculty further state that in an untimed situation, such as a classroom, the student may be able to perform at a level

higher than that indicated by the CGP. Further, the lack of test-wiseness on the part of many of these students also adversely affects test performance.

Although tentative in nature, the data presented do suggest that the ESL program does not consistently prepare students for college-level work. The explanation may lie not necessarily with the quality of instruction but rather with the ambitious and possibly unrealistic goal of expecting students, some entering without any English-language skills and variable literacy in their own languages, to perform at the college-level after four semesters of ESL instruction.

Performance of ESL Students on the CLAST. As of August 1, 1984, students must achieve passing scores on all four sections of the CLAST in order to receive an Associate of Arts degree. Analyzing the performance of ESL students on this test may provide valuable information.

A campus-level study (Romanik, 1983b) indicated that the lowest scoring students were much more likely to have enrolled in several ESL courses. Preliminary results from a comprehensive collegewide study (Belcher, 1985) supported this initial finding.

Of 1,053 students taking the CLAST during the Fall Term, 1984 administration, 97 or 9% were identified as having earned at least one ESL credit. In general, these ESL students averaged approximately thirty-one scale points lower in the reading section, twenty in writing, fifteen in computation, and 1.7 points lower (on a scale of eight) on the essay section. As a result, ESL students passed each section of the test at a lower rate than non-ESL students (Table 20). The largest difference was found on the essay, where 35% of the ESL students passed versus 83% for non-ESL students. As with the CGP, performance was best on the computation section.

TABLE 20

COMBINED PERCENTAGES OF A.A. STUDENTS PASSING THE CLAST
IN THE SPRING AND FALL OF 1984

STUDENT GROUP	CLAST SUBTEST							
	READING 260*		WRITING 265*		COMPUTATION 260*		ESSAY 4**	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
ESL Students n=228	105	46	169	74	195	86	79	35
Non-ESL Students n=2184	1798	82	2033	93	2045	94	1819	83
			Total n=2412					

NOTE: ESL students were defined as those having earned at least one ESL credit.

* Scale score required to pass this section.

** Score required to pass the holistically scored essay (range 2 to 8).

Source: Miami-Dade Community College Transcript Records
and Test Master Records.

Although non-ESL students passed all four sections more than three times as often as ESL students (Table 21), this difference becomes smaller when comparing the percent of those passing at least three sections (52% for ESL students compared to 88% for non-ESL students). State rules allow the provisional admission of students passing three of four sections to the upper division of State universities. These students must pass the fourth section by the time they earn 36 credits.

When CLAST performance was analyzed on three categories of credits earned, students in the mid-range tended to perform better on all sections except the essay, where there were no differences (Table 22). ESL students with a grade point average (GPA) above 3.00 also performed better than their counterparts (Table 23). The difference was most acute on the essay, where students with a 3.00 GPA passed this section more than twice as often.

Lower performance by ESL students on almost any measure should not be surprising, given the task of learning a new language. This is especially the case since the make-up of the local community does not consistently encourage students to practice their new language outside the classroom. Although greater efforts need to be directed toward improving the performance of ESL students, expectations must be realistic, since these students have a longer way to go. This does not mean, however, that standards should be different for these students.

Nevertheless, many ESL students do perform adequately on the CLAST. Although passing scores were not required, 45% of the 161 ESL students who took the CLAST graduated during the 1983-84 academic year would have been eligible to advance to the upper division (Table 20). Thirty-seven or 23% were able to pass all four sections. Data from Belcher (1985) were also consistent with these findings, indicating that 52% of the ESL students passed three of four sections

TABLE 21

A COMPARISON OF PASS RATES AMONG ESL AND NON-ESL STUDENTS ON THE SPRING AND FALL TERM (1983-84) CLAST ADMINISTRATIONS

STUDENT GROUP	PERCENT PASSING CLAST									
	NO SECTION		ONE SECTION		TWO SECTIONS		THREE SECTIONS		FOUR SECTIONS	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
ESL Students n=228	19	8	34	15	57	25	72	32	46	20
Non-ESL Students n=2184	26	1	77	4	165	8	376	17	1540	71

* Data are presented for both Spring and Fall Term administrations combined.

Source: Belcher, 1985

TABLE 22

A COMPARISON OF FALL TERM 1984
CLAST SCORES AMONG AA STUDENTS
BY ESL CREDITS EARNED

ESL CREDITS EARNED	CLAST SUBTEST							
	READING		WRITING		COMPUTATION		ESSAY	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
None n=956	903	94	904	95	940	98	801	84
1 - 10 n=29	18	62	23	79	27	93	9	31
11 - 20 n=29	21	72	25	86	28	97	9	31
More than 21 n=39	26	67	31	79	37	95	12	31

Source: Miami-Dade Community College transcript and test record files

TABLE 23

PROPORTION OF ESL STUDENTS PASSING THE CLAST
BY GRADE POINT AVERAGE
FALL TERM, 1984

n=97

GPA	CLAST SUBTEST							
	READING		WRITING		COMPUTATION		ESSAY	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
0 - 2.49 n=18	8	44	15	83	15	83	2	11
2.50 - 2.99 n=18	8	44	12	67	16	89	3	17
3.00 - 3.49 n=34	27	79	29	85	34	100	15	44
3.50 - 4.00 n=27	22	81	23	25	27	100	10	37

Source: Belcher, 1985

on the Fall 1984 administration, while 20% passed all four (Table 24). These figures compare favorably with the performance of developmental students who graduated and took the CLAST during the same period. Though figures may appear low, it should be noted that the ESL program gave many of these language-deficient but otherwise academically competent students an opportunity to overcome the language barrier and pursue a college education.

These data only indirectly suggest the effectiveness of the ESL program for at least certain students. CLAST performance of ESL students has been partially dependent on courses outside the ESL curriculum, including developmental coursework. Therefore, a comprehensive study identifying and analyzing the performance at each higher level beyond ESL is required for more definitive conclusions. Further, such a study should attempt to differentiate between students interested in pursuing an academic course of study and those interested in acquiring sufficient language skills for everyday living. The College has recently recognized the need to establish different ESL curricula for each population.

Attitudes Toward the ESL Program. As with the developmental program, there was broad support for the ESL program among faculty, students, staff, and the community at large. As reported under Goal 1, there was strong support for offering ESL courses at Miami-Dade from the various community groups surveyed. As would be expected, faculty (94%) and students (80%) involved in the ESL or developmental program also supported offering ESL courses.

A sample of the general student population indicated that 85% of those who had taken ESL courses reported that they helped in subsequent coursework. Among those presently enrolled in ESL courses, 321 or 83% indicated they would not be able to complete their college education without such courses. The faculty and College administrators also had favorable attitudes towards the effectiveness of

TABLE 24

PROPORTION OF ESL AND/OR DEVELOPMENTAL STUDENTS
PASSING ZERO, ONE, TWO, THREE, OR FOUR SECTIONS OF THE CLAST
DURING THE 1983-84 ACADEMIC YEAR

STUDENT GROUP	NUMBER OF SECTIONS PASSED									
	ZERO		ONE		TWO		THREE		FOUR	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Students enrolled in ESL, Developmental Reading & Writing n=68	5	7	14	21	23	34	12	18	14	21
Students enrolled in ESL only n=93	11	12	17	18	19	20	23	25	23	25
All ESL students combined n=161	16	10	31	19	42	26	35	22	37	23
Students enrolled in Developmental Reading and Writing without ESL n=213	23	11	37	17	45	21	57	27	51	24

Source: Miami-Dade Community College Transcript Records and Test Master Records.

the ESL program: 72% of the developmental/ESL faculty felt that it was effective. Sixty-three percent of staff and administrators had similar opinions.

Thus, although survey data indicate that the ESL program is effective, empirical data to validate such effectiveness should be acquired. This would serve the additional purpose of possibly further improving the delivery of instruction via modification of curricula or other techniques which could make the program even more effective than perceived at present.

Effectiveness of Instructional Personnel. An overwhelming majority of ESL students surveyed (88%) felt that their instructors were very helpful in learning course materials. Of those able to respond, 80% had similar opinions regarding the laboratory or learning center. It is significant to note, however, that 31% of the ESL students surveyed were unable to respond, possibly indicating that these students had not attended or were not required to attend the laboratory or learning center as part of their ESL instruction. The former consideration is likely since, for example, at South Campus there is no laboratory associated with Level IV. However, given the favorable response of students, it may be incumbent upon the various ESL departments to consider further use of a laboratory to supplement classroom instruction. Written and audio-visual materials used in ESL courses also received favorable ratings. Seventy-five percent felt these materials enhanced their learning. Eighty-four percent of the students reported receiving the help necessary to pass their ESL courses and 86% felt their progress in these courses was satisfactory. Thus, it appears that ESL students see themselves as receiving the necessary assistance from each of the sources identified above.

There is broad support (93%) among ESL students for making attendance mandatory. This support should be taken advantage of since many faculty feel

that such attendance should be mandatory and should form part of the final grade.

GOAL 8: TO DETERMINE THE USE OF ADDITIONAL TESTING SUBSEQUENT TO INITIAL PLACEMENT WITHIN ESL COURSES.

Of the forty ESL faculty surveyed, 22 or 55% indicated that additional assessment is conducted during the first week of classes to refine placement. This is a rather low figure, since refinement of placement is part of ESL departmental policy. Although 62% indicated that a writing sample was used for placement, it was not possible to determine whether this was used prior to registration or during the first week of class. However, an overwhelming proportion of ESL faculty (94%) indicated that any reassignment affected less than one-fourth of the students. This figure is comparable to that found for developmental faculty.

In addition to a writing sample, an alternate version of the EPT, the TOEFL, and departmental tests were utilized for reassessment in the classroom. Although not empirically validated, 85% of the faculty indicated that these instruments were effective. In addition to acquiring data on these instruments, a tracking system should be developed in order to determine the number of reassignments recommended by instructors versus those actually taking place.

GOAL 9: TO EVALUATE THE USE OF EXIT TESTS UTILIZED IN ESL COURSES.

Sixty-two percent of the 40 ESL faculty surveyed indicated that their department utilized exit tests in ESL courses. These tests included an alternate version of the EPT, a writing sample, and locally-developed departmental tests. The Council on Instructional Affairs (1984) has recommended that state institutions certify that exiting students from developmental and ESL

courses have acquired the necessary competencies. The Council also strongly suggested that this be accomplished via exit testing. Thus, in light of these developments at the state level, the Prescriptive Education Committee recommends that exit tests be developed collegewide for each level of ESL instruction and that the effectiveness of these instruments be empirically evaluated.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

Following are the recommendations from the Prescriptive Education Committee. Each recommendation is followed by a brief rationale, highlighting relevant data and detailing how the recommendation will be implemented. This latter section also provides operational steps involved and projected time frames for completion. Recommendations 1-3 concern mainly testing and placement, 4-7 concern the developmental program, and 8-11 concern ESL.

Testing and Placement

Recommendation 1: The College should communicate more effectively to its varied constituencies its educational mission and the important role an open door admissions policy plays in that mission.

Rationale: A substantial majority of students, community respondents, and almost half the faculty favored requiring students to pass a test of basic skills prior to enrollment. However, these groups also overwhelmingly supported developmental and ESL courses which would serve students excluded by such a policy. Inconsistency with other data indicated that the real impact of a selective admission policy was not fully considered. Additionally, there was less than unanimous support for the open door policy when the question was posed directly to College personnel and various community groups. Efforts need to be directed towards better informing all concerned parties--students, the community, and Miami-Dade employees--regarding the need to maintain the College's open door policy and the role of entry-level placement therein.

Implementation. There is a need to mount a campaign to remind the various groups served by Miami-Dade of the mission and philosophy of the community college. For example, the College may wish to send representatives to local

high school and junior high school PTA meetings to explain what Miami-Dade is doing in the community and how it attempts to work with students entering with a broad range of academic skills. This approach would not only serve as a recruiting device but would enhance the College's image in the community. In addition, the Public Affairs Office can provide relevant periodic information to the media highlighting the success of students who would be denied an opportunity for a college education if not for the open door policy. Finally, College personnel should take every opportunity to discuss this issue when attending local and state committee meetings, and when addressing community groups. This project requires the immediate attention of marketing and recruitment personnel at the College to develop a plan with specific strategies for implementation. Such efforts will begin immediately.

Recommendation 2: A systematic effort should be undertaken to familiarize all relevant segments of Miami-Dade with its current placement policy and tools utilized.

Rationale: Survey results indicated that a significant segment of the faculty was unfamiliar not only with the instruments and procedures involved but with their effectiveness as predictors. Similar results indicated that students feel that there is no relationship between test scores and classroom performance. Part of the explanation may lie with the faculty's own reservations regarding the placement process and that almost half of the students indicated that their scores and the role they play in course selection were not fully explained to them by advisors.

Implementation: Workshops will be offered to faculty and staff to familiarize them with current testing policies and procedures. These will include description and content of the tests and conditions of their

administration. The workshops will also present data, in lay terms, regarding the effectiveness of the tests as predictors. Faculty and staff should also be given an opportunity to take the tests and experience the process first hand. However, for such workshops to have the desired effect, faculty must be receptive to such an effort. Such workshops would begin with Fall Term 1985.

Advisors should give a more thorough interpretation and explanation of test scores to students. Advisors should also be provided with experience tables to indicate the probability of success at each score level and how that probability may increase after appropriate intervention. In this way, students can more easily appreciate the potential benefits of placement testing. This should also require a more individualized approach to the advisement of students than the assembly-line process now characteristic of peak registration periods.

Students presently receive a document with their notification of admission detailing certain testing policies, describing the tests, and including sample questions for each section. While this practice should continue, the College will also provide pre-registration sessions to serve the dual purpose of providing information on the testing process and serving as a general orientation to Miami-Dade. It is recommended, however, that attendance at such sessions be voluntary. These pre-registration sessions will also begin with Fall Term 1985 on a pilot basis.

Recommendation 3: Placement policies should be fully standardized and applied consistently and uniformly across campuses.

Rationale: Faculty overwhelmingly supported uniform placement policies at Miami-Dade. However, less than one-fourth feel they are uniform at present. Scores for placement of students into specific developmental levels have not been empirically validated. This may contribute to the perception by some

faculty that the placement process is less effective than it is. Campus differences in placement within developmental courses further complicate the issue. The differences in the placement process in ESL are still greater. Placement scores differ across campuses and have never been empirically validated.

Implementation: The College should work toward extending policy to provide for uniform placement of students in the ESL program and within the developmental reading, writing, and mathematics curriculum. The College should also evaluate and give consideration to establishing a formal re-testing policy on the placement test. The College Research and Testing Committee began examination of existing policy in the Fall Term 1984. Final recommendations will be published in the June 1986 placement criteria document.

This committee consisting of administrative, research, and academic personnel should be appointed to design and implement a study to determine the validity of the current process for placing ESL students. The study should include the effectiveness of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the English Placement Test, and possibly a holistically-scored writing sample.

This committee should be appointed by the start of the Fall Term, 1985. A design for the study and details for administration should be completed by the end of that term. Data should be collected during the following academic year. A validity report and recommendations for placement policy should be completed by September 1987.

The College should also conduct a comprehensive, systematic, and definitive investigation to determine empirically: 1) what role, if any, a writing sample should play in the placement process, 2) the need for further increasing course requirements in reading for students with deficiencies in this area, and 3) the optimal placement scores for specific curriculum levels in developmental

reading, writing, and computation. A collegewide committee of research personnel with representatives from humanities, social science, developmental studies, and ESL departments should be appointed to design a long-term research project. The timetable projected for this committee is as follows:

1.	Committee Appointed	January 1986
2.	Design Complete and Funding Appropriated	June 1986
3.	Begin Placement Testing	August 1986
4.	End Placement Testing	January 1987
5.	Collect Follow-Up Data	June 1989
6.	Research Report Completed	June 1990

Developmental Program

Recommendation 4: The College should conduct a comprehensive research program addressing the effectiveness of all developmental areas.

Rationale: A review of the literature revealed a lack of empirical studies, both nationally and locally, with regard to determining the effectiveness of the extensive interventions used by the College to remediate underprepared students. The need for such a comprehensive study has been formally recognized and recommended by the Collegewide Research and Testing Committee since 1980. A rigorous program evaluation effort addressing the effectiveness of developmental offerings would also be consistent with the fact that the College receives public funds and that the expenditure of such funds should be consistent with proven pedagogical strategies.

Implementation: The research program should include both cohort or longitudinal and cross-sectional designs. The strategy used to collect longitudinal data should follow the guidelines suggested by the Collegewide Research and Testing Committee in May 1982 (Losak, 1982). This design called

for random selection and placement of a sample of first-time-in-college students into regular and developmental classes. Performance of the sample would be followed on a longitudinal basis and conclusions made with regard to whether students requiring and receiving developmental instruction performed more successfully than those students requiring but not receiving such instruction.

A collegewide committee composed of developmental faculty and members from the Collegewide Research and Testing Committee should be established to design, conduct, and report the findings of the study. Issues of particular relevance requiring committee deliberation should include: 1) the political sensitivities resulting from such a design; 2) coordination at the state level regarding possible restrictions related to the statewide common entry-level testing program; and 3) determination of whether additional personnel and/or funding are required to conduct the study and the research program in general.

The following suggests a timetable for conducting the longitudinal portion of the research program:

- Committee Appointed — September 1985
- Design Completed — December 1985
- Design Implemented on 85-2 Cohort; Follow-up on Criterion Measures — January 1986 through January 1989
- Data Analyzed and Interpreted — January 1989 - March 1989
- Report Distributed — September 1989

Additional areas in this research program, generating findings within three years include:

- Determination of the individual differences (e.g., attitudinal, motivational, personality, demographic, and in learning style) among underprepared students who progress to graduation versus those who do

not (e.g., What are the personal characteristics of underprepared students who are successful compared to those who are unsuccessful?).

- Determination of success rates of students exiting from developmental into college-level courses, including immediate entry to the communication sequence, mathematics courses, and core courses (e.g., How successful are developmental students in the next level of regular coursework?).
- Determination of the minimal entry-level skills required in reading, writing, and computation for which a student can be remediated within a total of three academic terms and expected to have at least a reasonable probability of progressing to the point of successfully passing CLAST and graduating from the College (e.g., What are the minimal entry-level skills that a student can have and still be successful at Miami-Dade?).
- Determination of whether the proportion of graduating students has changed since passing scores have been set on the CLAST (e.g., What is the impact of standardized exit criteria on students who participated in developmental instruction?).

The individual studies included in this research program should be the combined responsibility of the Collegewide Research and Testing Committee, Academic Affairs Committee, and the College Preparatory Task Force. Additional College personnel and/or monies may be required to conduct the research program. All studies included in the program, except for the three-year cohort analysis, should be completed, and results distributed throughout the College by September 1988. A summary of the findings from all studies included in the research program will be prepared by January 1989.

Recommendation 5: The College should continue its efforts to establish, refine, and standardize diagnostic assessment and reassignment strategies for all developmental areas.

Rationale: An overwhelming majority (86%) of the developmental staff surveyed reported that some form of additional testing was used. Approximately 90% also indicated that the additional assessment was effective in refining placement. In general, one-quarter of the students entering the various developmental areas are reassigned, typically after placement during the first week of the term.

Implementation: Four questions concerning diagnostic assessment and reassignment within the areas of developmental instruction require further investigation, since they were not fully answered by the present study. These questions include: 1) What assessment instruments are used for diagnostic testing at the various campuses? 2) What specific measurement criteria are used to determine course or level reassignment? 3) How effective are the reassignment procedures and the instruments currently used for diagnostic testing? and 4) Should the diagnostic assessment instruments and measurement criteria used for reassignment be standardized collegewide?

These questions will be addressed by the existing collegewide committees responsible for decisions relevant to developmental instruction (viz., the College Preparatory Task Force and Collegewide Academic Affairs Committee). The Collegewide Research and Testing Committee should work together with these groups in developing research strategies to answer the above questions. These issues should be resolved and all College personnel informed of the decisions of these groups by September 1988.

Recommendation 6: The College should continue its efforts to establish, refine, and standardize criteria for students exiting from the various areas of developmental instruction.

Rationale: The need for continued emphasis upon establishing and refining exit criteria for students completing developmental coursework was suggested from a variety of sources. Transcript analyses of students failing two or more CLAST subtests indicated that grades in communications and mathematics were somewhat higher than expected from the students' performances on CLAST. This study called for establishing minimal competencies commensurate with a grade of C. Additionally, the general faculty surveyed by the Prescriptive Education Committee reported that at least 20% of their students entered class with deficient academic skills and, therefore, had progressed to higher levels of instruction despite continued academic deficiencies. Over three-quarters of the developmental staff surveyed also reported that some form of exit testing was used in their area. However, no determination concerning the effectiveness of such testing was made during the study. It should also be noted that the issue of establishing exit criteria from college-preparatory courses is a high priority at the state level.

Implementation. The same questions mentioned previously with regard to diagnostic testing and reassignment are relevant to the continuing study of exit criteria, applied to students completing developmental instruction. These should also be addressed and resolved by the College Preparatory Task Force, the Academic Affairs Committee, and the Research and Testing Committee.

These questions include: 1) What assessment instruments are used for purposes of exit testing at the various campuses? 2) What specific measurement criteria are used to define satisfactory exit skills? 3) What is the reliability and validity of the exit tests used? 4) Should the exit tests and

criteria be standardized collegewide within academic departments and reflect the competencies corresponding to those required by the next step in college-level instruction?

Additional areas requiring study include operational definitions for S, P, and U grades, and what proportion of students receiving P and U grades succeed after re-enrollment. These questions will be addressed in a similar manner and timeframe as those previously discussed.

Recommendation 7: The College should provide support and coordination through established committee structures to address the numerous unanswered questions and suggestions made by the Prescriptive Education Committee.

Rationale: In addition to those already identified, a number of questions remained unanswered at the completion of the Committee's study. Additionally, numerous suggestions were made by committee members to improve the developmental programs at Miami-Dade. These suggestions were primarily based upon the professional experience and judgement of committee members, rather than empirical or attitudinal research findings. Further study of such suggestions is, therefore, needed before they become binding recommendations.

The following represents a list of questions requiring further consideration by staff and administrators involved with developmental and college-level instruction:

- What college-level courses should underprepared students be allowed to concurrently enroll in while participating in developmental instruction?
- Should students be "locked out" of any college-level courses while enrolled in developmental instruction and, if so, from which courses should they be restricted?

- Should a combination of reading and writing scores be used to place students into communication and general education courses?
- How effective is the advisement process for students entering and exiting the developmental program?
- Should the use of audio-visual materials be increased in developmental courses?
- How effective are the present study skills courses, and should developmental students be required to enroll in such courses?
- Are disabled students presently receiving the degree of support required to successfully complete developmental instruction?

The following represents a list of suggestions made by the Prescriptive Education Committee, intended for consideration and adoption by the College as future plans of action:

- The College should consider developing and implementing a comprehensive orientation program for students enrolled in developmental and ESL courses. This program of "college survival skills" should be composed of instruction in a variety of areas including study skills.
- An on-going, in-service training program should be required of all full- and part-time faculty involved with developmental instruction at the College. Training should emphasize the upgrading of skills relevant to advances made within the field as well as other skills necessary to meet the needs of the diverse population served.
- The College should consider assigning a "counseling specialist" to each developmental program to assist in academic prescription and diagnosis, and to provide counseling services to students with emotional or stress-related difficulties.

- The College should examine existing faculty evaluation procedures as applied to the developmental program, and give consideration to mandatory classroom visitation by supervisors of both full- and part-time faculty. Students should also be given the opportunity to evaluate developmental instruction on a regular basis. Such evaluation should be standardized collegewide but allow for individual differences across campuses and academic departments.
- Findings from research projects initiated by the College concerning topics relevant to the developmental program should be more widely disseminated and explained in detail to developmental faculty. Areas of research identified by members of the Prescriptive Education Committee as particularly relevant included retention and attrition studies, and placement and follow-up analyses of graduates with regard to opinions of employers who have hired Miami-Dade graduates.

Implementation. The questions requiring additional empirical research and suggestions for future consideration will be discussed among the members of the College Preparatory Task Force, Academic Affairs Committee, and Collegewide Research and Testing Committee. These committees will determine future actions required by the College relevant to the identified areas by September 1987.

ESL Program

Recommendation 8: The College should conduct a comprehensive study of the effectiveness of the ESL program.

Rationale: The empirical research presently available on the effectiveness of the ESL program is very limited. There are no data on a number of variables, such as attrition and graduation rates for ESL students, nor on their performance in college-level courses. ESL students are not only a substantial

proportion of the College's enrollment but represent a primary source of students for regular college-level courses. Therefore, maximizing their progress and performance will have wide implications.

Implementation: This recommended study should define an ESL student and address the following preliminary questions raised by the Prescriptive Education Committee:

1. What are the attrition rates in ESL courses and how do they compare with other areas?
2. What proportion of students successfully complete the recommended curriculum at each ESL level?
3. How do exiting ESL students perform on the various sections of the entry-level placement test (i.e., the Florida MAPS)?
4. What is the graduation rate for students in ESL and how does this compare to other academic areas?
5. How do ESL students perform in English composition, general education, and other college-level courses?
6. How do students, exempt from ESL based on EPT or TOEFL scores, perform on the entry-level placement test and in college-level courses?

Data on these issues should be analyzed by campus and by other variables, such as native language, GPA in ESL courses, ESL credits earned, entering English-language skills, and whether the student participated in an immersion-type ESL curriculum. Data analysis should be completed by January 1988.

A collegewide FSL Coordinating Committee should be established by Winter Term of 1986 to work in conjunction with research staff in compiling the necessary data. This committee should also be involved in the implementation of other recommendations made by the Prescriptive Education Committee affecting the ESL program (e.g., common exit tests). This committee should have support from the various ESL departments as well as representatives from the general faculty.

Recommendation 9: The College should establish a system to identify students interested in and capable of pursuing an academic ESL program.

Rationale: Until the last few terms, the credit ESL program did not differentiate between those students interested in completing a college degree and those wishing to acquire English sufficient for everyday living, employment, or other non-academic goals. The lower performance of ESL students on various outcome measures may be partially related to the inclusion of these latter students who in many cases have low literacy in their native language and low educational level. These latter students would have a more formidable task, possibly requiring different teaching techniques and a longer period of instruction, if they wished to pursue an academic program.

Implementation: The ESL Coordinating Committee, with support from the testing and research area, should take the leadership in establishing preliminary criteria for identifying these two populations. Some data may be already available, since the Wolfson Campus has been screening students for this purpose.

At the Wolfson Campus Language Institute, student intentions and interests combined with EPT scores are utilized in the screening process. Students scoring in the 0-20 range are strongly encouraged to enroll in the non-academic ESL track. In the Wolfson Campus Division of Bilingual Studies, student declaration and previous educational background are the primary criteria for academic versus non-academic assignment. These two models may provide a starting point for designing a collegewide screening system.

The ESL Coordinating Committee should also consider more objective criteria in screening students. This should include assessment of academic competency in the native language. Obviously, because of the diverse nature of the ESL students, this may present an insurmountable logistical problem, given the

numerous languages which would need to be considered. Nevertheless, an effort should be made to develop a more objective indication of academic potential.

Following establishment of the committee during the 1985 Fall Term, preliminary recommendations should be provided by the Winter Term, 1986. This would allow for at least a pilot study on how students, placed using the new placement guidelines, fared on variables such as attrition, success rate, and GPA during the following terms. Using these data, final recommendations should be made by Fall Term, 1986.

Recommendation 10: <u>There should be collegewide exit tests from each level of ESL instruction</u>.

<u>Rationale</u>: Although most ESL departments already use some type of exit test, they vary from locally-developed instruments to alternate forms of the EPT. Data on their effectiveness in measuring competencies achieved as well as in predicting performance at the next level of instruction have not been systematically compiled or analyzed. Such exit tests should be consistent with anticipated state rules which will require that institutions certify that students exiting certain programs, such as ESL, have acquired the necessary skills to function at the next level.

<u>Implementation</u>: The variety of exit tests used may provide comparative data on their effectiveness. Utilizing a methodologically sound system, student performance on each instrument, as well as performance at the next level, should be compared to determine the most effective exit test. Random assignment may be used to test students in various courses and at various levels of instruction. While it would be logistically desirable for one instrument to be utilized at all levels, it is conceivable that different instruments will be required for a final exit test from the ESL program. The ESL Coordinating

Committee should consider using the CGP, which is sufficiently similar in content to the MAPS to serve this purpose.

Recommendation 11: The College should set collegewide guidelines for the use of assessment instruments used to refine ESL placement.

Rationale: Implementation of an empirically validated ESL placement program may significantly reduce the number of incorrectly placed students, thereby reducing need for reassessment in the classroom. However, such reassessment would still be valuable not only to improve student placement but to verify that students have the prerequisite skills to achieve the competencies for the courses enrolled in. Although an overwhelming majority of faculty feel these instruments are effective, empirical data may indicate that one instrument may outperform others.

Implementation: Under the jurisdiction of the ESL Coordinating Committee, more accurate and detailed information will be acquired on the instruments used for reassessment. This should be accomplished by a survey of appropriate faculty. This committee should also establish a tracking system which will be able to indicate the number of reassignments recommended versus those actually taking place and to monitor performance of these students as well as the track record of each instrument utilized. This monitoring system should be operational by the Winter Term of 1987.

SUMMARY

During the past two decades, community colleges have focused on increasing access to higher education for all types of students, especially those previously under-represented. This shift has challenged community colleges to deal effectively with wide differences in student preparedness, from the very able to those with very significant basic skill deficiencies. These wide differences in student ability have spurred a renewed and growing interest in the use of prescriptive education to provide systematic decisions for matching students with appropriate educational treatments.

To meet these challenges, while maintaining a strong commitment to preserve the open door, Miami-Dade found it necessary to reform its educational program. The general goal of these reforms was to maintain free access while also enhancing standards. These reforms, introduced over the past ten years, have also meant that the College has become more directive concerning the academic choices available to students.

The College has used some form of entry-level testing since 1960. Such testing became an integral part of operations by the late 1970s. Initially, the assessment process varied from campus to campus, but by 1978 a collegewide committee was formed to develop a basic skills assessment program. Deliberations resulted in a collegewide placement program, which was used from 1980 to 1984. This testing and placement program included four subtests from the Comparative Guidance and Placement Program (CGP) published by the College Board: Reading, Written English Expression, Computation, and Elementary Algebra. This standardized the Miami-Dade assessment program and also established common placement scores for course selection purposes. Computer "locks" restricting enrollment in particular courses were used for the first

time during the 1981-82 academic year. Testing was required for first-time-in-college students enrolling in at least nine credits, students having registered for 15 credits or more, and students enrolling in any math or English course.

An alternate examination was required for international students and for those with limited English language proficiency. If language deficiencies were indicated by test scores, students were required to take English as a second language (ESL) courses. Such students were also restricted from registering for certain additional coursework until after they had successfully completed the necessary developmental or ESL instruction.

Unlike the basic skills assessment for students competent in the English language, which was standardized collegewide, ESL placement remains different at each campus. The College has made efforts to standardize ESL placement, but to date these have not been successful.

During the Winter Term of 1984, the assessment process underwent further change. To comply with a new state law regarding common placement testing throughout Florida, Miami-Dade elected to use the College Board's Multiple Assessment Program and Services (Florida MAPS) from the list of approved instruments. The State will establish common cut-off scores for these tests and set placement criteria by July 1, 1985.

As a consequence of the open access philosophy, a large proportion of entering students have been deficient in basic academic skills, including reading, writing, and mathematics. To meet the needs of such students, Miami-Dade also implemented a developmental or remedial education program in the early 1960s. The College moved from awarding credit for such remedial courses during the 1970s to limiting the total to six credits. By 1982, credit was no longer awarded for developmental instruction. Additionally, during the 1960s, underprepared students were required to enroll in developmental coursework,

while by the early 1970s entry-level test scores were used for advisement purposes only. Mandatory enrollment in developmental courses was reinstated, however, during the early 1980s.

Miami-Dade has offered developmental instruction in three areas: reading, writing, and mathematics. Such instruction has progressed from a lecture format in the 1960s, to a tutorial laboratory design in the 1970s, to current practice which includes a combination of both instructional strategies. Students are placed within developmental courses based upon results from the collegewide entry-level testing program, although additional assessment and reassignment occurs within the multi-level reading, writing, and mathematics programs, generally during the first week of the term.

Since the early 1960s, Dade County has had a continuous flow of refugees and immigrants from various Caribbean and Latin American countries, contributing to the substantial numbers of students entering the College with native languages other than English. The College began offering English as a second language courses in 1967. By the early 1970s, such courses were developed into a four-level sequential program emphasizing speech, grammar, reading, and writing. The primary purpose of the ESL program was to prepare second-language students for college-level courses taught in English. Currently, the College also offers ESL courses designed for students not desiring to continue in college, but rather to learn communication skills for everyday life and immediate employment.

For purposes of the 1984 Institutional Self-Study, a twenty-one member Prescriptive Education Committee developed nine major goals to evaluate the College's testing and placement program, developmental courses, and ESL instruction. Reports distributed by the Office of Institutional Research were reviewed for evaluation questions previously addressed by the College, while the

remaining questions required the collection of new data, principally by survey research. Data collection was accomplished by dividing committee members into four study groups including testing and placement, developmental studies (communications and computation), and ESL. Four surveys were constructed by the committee and administered to over 500 College faculty and approximately 2,500 students. As a result of questions submitted from the four study groups, additional survey data concerning prescriptive education was collected from nine community groups by the Self-Study Coordination Committee. Data resulting from the survey questionnaires were primarily tabulated and processed using the College's mainframe computer system. Computer printouts were distributed to all committee members, who studied the results and formulated recommendations.

Results indicated broad support for the College's prescriptive education programs from all groups surveyed. Although community groups felt that students must have the necessary skills before enrolling, they also overwhelmingly supported the continued offering of developmental and ESL programs at Miami-Dade. The apparent contradiction between these issues may be interpreted as a desire for improved postsecondary education without closing the door to a significant number of students.

Faculty and students also strongly supported the use of placement testing and the offering of developmental and ESL programs. Both groups favored requiring students with deficient skills, as identified by placement tests, to enroll in specific courses. However, a substantial proportion of students felt that these scores should be used for advisement purposes only. Faculty and students agreed that specific placement scores should be required for English and mathematics courses. However, opinion diverged on requiring specific courses in humanities, social science, and other courses. Faculty favored such requirements while students did not.

A review of previous validity studies on the CGP indicated that scores were a good predictor of performance in selected classes, such as English, mathematics, and social sciences. For example, students who consistently followed course selection based on placement scores on the CGP succeeded at a higher rate than those who did not. Although periodic review has resulted in some relatively minor changes in placement scores, annual validity studies over the past four years have essentially reconfirmed this conclusion.

However, survey results indicated reservation by at least part of the faculty on some issues regarding the effectiveness of the CGP. These reservations primarily related to perceptions that placement scores were too low, and that too many students were placed in courses for which they had inadequate skills. Factors contributing to these reservations may be related to the significant lack of familiarity with the CGP on the part of the faculty, inappropriate and inconsistent placement at the developmental level, and grade inflation. The latter is particularly relevant since all past validity studies used grades as the criterion measure. Thus, if there were questions regarding the criterion measure, conclusions made from validity data might also be suspect.

The situation regarding faculty perceptions towards ESL placement is similar except that, unlike the CGP, placement scores for the EPT have not been empirically validated. Since ESL placement policies at the various campuses differ, it is unlikely that a validity study can be conducted until uniform policies apply.

Survey results from students also pointed to several problem areas. Although most students were satisfied with course placements based on their scores, most felt there was no relationship between scores and their classroom performance. Further, almost half the students indicated that their scores and

the subsequent placement decisions were not adequately explained by their advisors. The College's complex and assembly-line-like advisement procedures were cited as major causes for this student dissatisfaction.

After careful review of all data gathered from the various sources, the Placement and Testing Subcommittee made the following recommendations:

- The College should communicate more effectively to its varied constituencies what its educational mission is and the important role an open door admissions policy plays in that mission.
- A systematic effort should be undertaken to familiarize all relevant segments at Miami-Dade with its current placement policy and tools utilized.
- Placement policies should be fully standardized and applied consistently and uniformly across campuses.

A review of previous research indicated that minimal information was available concerning the effectiveness of either developmental studies or ESL instruction. The lack of research data confirming the efficacy of both areas was evident at the national level as well as at the College.

Though the existing research was less than ideal, the overall conclusion from the empirical studies was that Miami-Dade has been successful in serving students who would not have had the opportunity to pursue a college education without the open access philosophy. Supporting data indicated that over one-third of the students graduating from the College had taken at least one developmental course, while on the average one-quarter had enrolled in at least one ESL course. Had the opportunity for a college education been denied to such underprepared students at the point of entry, the College and community would have lost a valuable resource.

Findings also suggested, however, that it may be unrealistic for many students to upgrade academic skills which years of previous instruction did not accomplish. Despite the finding that almost 20% of the students scoring in the top one-third on the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) enrolled in at least one developmental course, such students generally scored below, and had a higher failure rate than, students who had never enrolled in developmental courses. In addition to underprepared entry skills, developmental students generally tended to have less advanced exit skills.

Results also indicated that many ESL students were able to take the College's entry-level test (CGP) and/or register for college-level courses while still seriously deficient in English-language skills. In fact, data suggested that on the average fewer than 10% of the students identified as taking ESL courses passed all sections of the CGP. Such results imply that the ESL program is not adequately preparing students for college-level work. However, such negative findings may be attributable not to the quality of instruction but to the possibly unrealistic goal of preparing students, some without any English-language skills and/or minimal literacy in their native language, for college-level courses after only four terms of ESL instruction.

Despite the absence of unequivocal empirical support for the effectiveness of both developmental courses and ESL instruction, survey results unanimously supported such programming. Students enrolled in developmental and ESL courses, faculty responsible for such courses, and College staff, administrators, and community groups in general, reported that the College should continue its commitment to such instruction. Additionally, the overwhelming majority of ESL and developmental students surveyed felt that the instructors and support staff in laboratories or learning centers significantly helped them master course material.

Survey data also indicated that the majority of ESL and developmental staff surveyed used some form of additional assessment for purposes of reassignment or leveling. Some exit tests were also used to determine exiting skills of students. Such forms of assessment were different at each campus; however, the survey instruments used for purposes of the study did not determine whether standardized criteria were used.

Members of the three study groups comprising the Developmental/ESL subcommittee developed the following recommendations based on thorough analysis of the findings.

- The College should conduct comprehensive research concerning the effectiveness of both the developmental and ESL programs.
- The College should continue its efforts to refine and standardize diagnostic assessment, reassignment strategies, and exit criteria for students completing both developmental and ESL courses.
- A system should be established to identify students interested in and capable of pursuing an academic ESL program.
- Support and coordination should be provided by the College to address the numerous unanswered questions and suggestions developed by both of the Prescriptive Education subcommittees.

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1984 SELF-STUDY

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ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE FOR JUNIOR COLLEGES

AUGUST 30, 1985